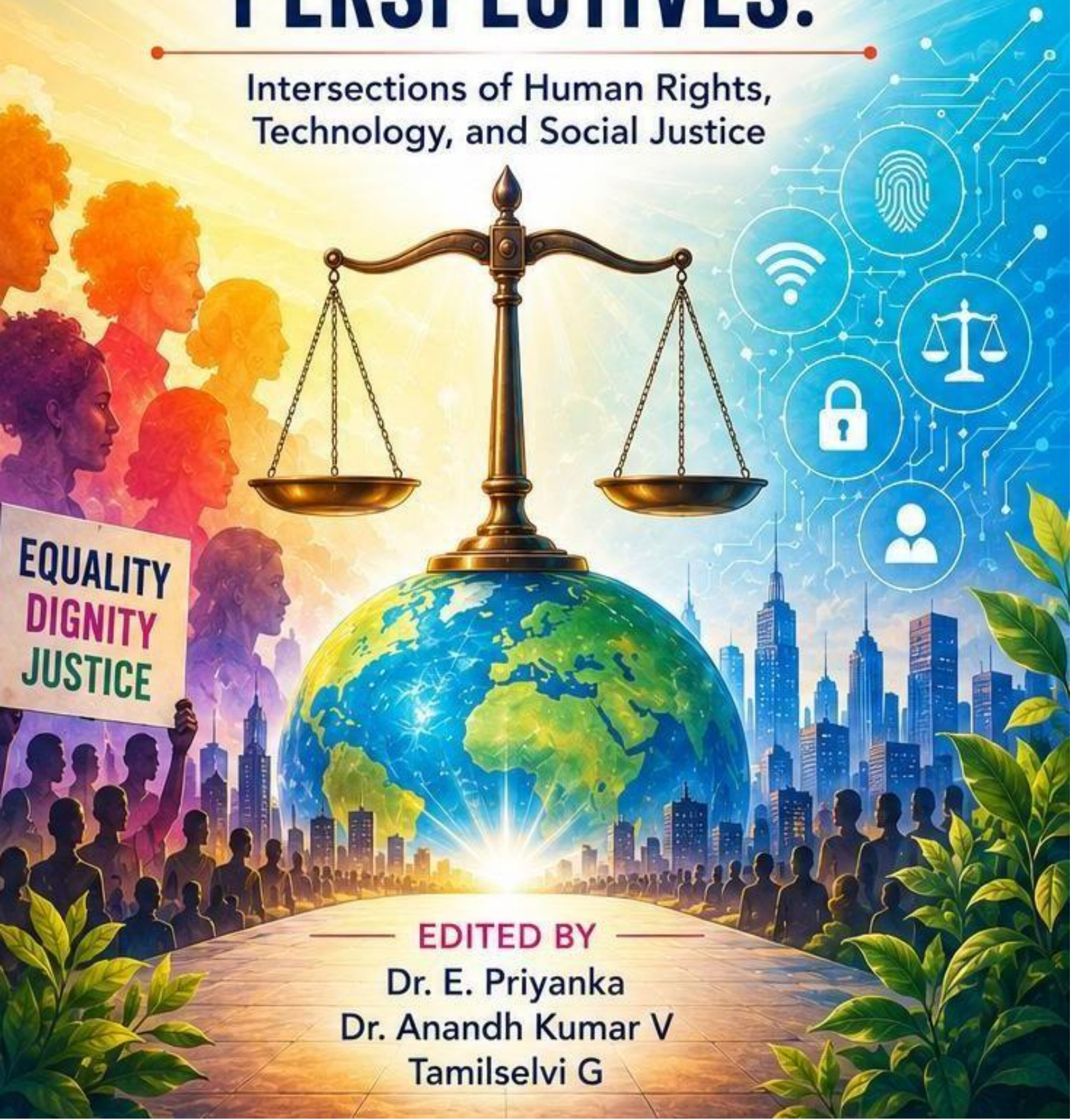
CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-LEGAL PERSPECTIVES:

Intersections of Human Rights, Technology, and Social Justice



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TITLE : Contemporary Socio-Legal Perspectives: Intersections of Human Rights, Technology, and Social Justice

ISBN: 978-93-4717-502-2

Editorial Board:
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Price :1000/-INR

Published by: Island Publishers
Tamilnadu, India
www.islandpublishers.in
Imprint at : Royal Printers- Guduvanchery
Tamil Nadu, India

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Island Publishers
Tamilnadu, India
www.islandpublishers.in

CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-LEGAL PERSPECTIVES: INTERSECTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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1. A STUDY ON RIGHTS OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH INCARCERATED MOTHER- INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Children living with incarcerated mothers constitute one of the most invisible and vulnerable groups within the criminal justice system. When any woman is imprisoned, their children have to face the choice of either remaining with the mother in prison or separated form mother leading to alternative care. In India, children below age of 6 years are allowed to stay with their mother in prison. The need of maternal care makes these children to reside within the prison despite being committed no offence and subjected to face social, economic, emotional and legal challenges which significantly affects their development and wellbeing. The prison environment will not be always proper to physical, emotional and psychological development of children.

This article examines the legal framework protecting the rights of children with incarcerated mothers from Indian perspective. Analyses the Constitutional provisions under fundamental rights and directive principles of state policy, supreme court guidelines and other statutory frameworks such as Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and the Model Prison Manuals which safeguards the children. These instruments focuses on providing proper healthcare, education and care inside the prison.

KEY WORDS

Incarcerated mother, children, prison, constitution, juvenile justice

INTRODUCTION

Children with incarcerated mothers are those whose mothers are imprisoned or in judicial custody for the violation of law. The children are subjected to live with their mothers in prison for the maternal care. Though these children are innocent they are spending their crucial development stage of life in prison and often experience social stigma, emotional distress. The children below 6 years are allowed to stay with their mother in prison as childhood requires constant maternal care, breastfeeding and emotional connection. The supreme court in the case of R.D.Upadhyay V. State of Andhra Pradesh laid down the guidelines for safeguarding the rights and welfare of children with incarcerated mothers. The court held that the children are not prisoners and must be provided with adequate nutrition, healthcare, education facilities like other children.

In India, the legal framework for governing the issues are Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 which emphasizes for interests of children and the model Prison manual which permits the child to stay with the mother in prison. Despite these legal safeguards, children face several difficulties such as the lack of adequate facilities in prison for the development of child, limited exposure to outside the world, male wards to be grown among the females only, lack of education facilities affects the overall growth of the children. After completing 6 years they are separated from mother leading to psychological impact on child resulting in violent or aggressive behaviour and attachment issues with relatives are caretakers.

This article examines the rights of children with incarcerated mothers and also analyses the constitutional provisions, supreme court's guidelines, and statutory framework to evaluate the adequacy of existing protections. And also discusses the challenge faced by those children with incarcerated mothers.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Children living with incarcerated mothers face serious challenges despite committing no offence, raising concerns about fundamental and human rights violation. There is an absence of clear statutory framework addressing their protection and welfare, leading to inconsistent implementation. prison environment often lacks adequate infrastructure for child care, health, education which affects their overall development.

OBJECTIVES

To examine the legal status and rights of children living with incarcerated mothers.

To analyse the constitutional provisions, statutory framework in India relating to the protection and welfare of children with incarcerated mothers.

To examine the guidelines given by supreme court in the case of R.D. Upadhyay V. State of Andhra Pradesh for the welfare of children and improvement of prison facilities for children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the doctrinal research methodology to examine the rights of children with incarcerated mothers from Indian perspective by relying on primary and secondary sources of law. Primary sources include Indian judicial decisions in R.D. Upadhyay V. State of Andhra Pradesh, statutory framework under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, manuals related to child rights. Secondary sources include articles, journals, reports published by national organisations and existing research studies on prison administration and child rights. The study is limited to rights and safeguards available to children and does not empirical field research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Indian context the scholars mainly focused on the rights of women prisoners, the issues in prison and the reform. They pointed that the prisons are designed for adults and will not be suitable for the children to live there. The judiciary's decision in in R.D. Upadhyay V. State of Andhra Pradesh played a significant role in protecting the children in prison. Studies conducted under the framework of united nations convention on child rights and Bangkok rules emphasized that the interest of child should be given primary considerations. And scholars also indicated the challenges faced by the children in prison and also the inadequate prison facilities.

INDIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

(i) THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, 1950

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

ARTICLE 14- RIGHT TO EQUALITY- guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law to all persons within the territory of India. Children living in prison with their incarcerated mother should be treated equally as other children in society. This article ensures that the children are not deprived of basic facilities for their development such as healthcare, education, proper nutrition.[1]

ARTICLE 15(3) - SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMAN AND CHILDREN-The state is empowered to make special provisions for woman and children because of their vulnerability in the society and the need for additional protection. The state shall introduce welfare measures and policies for the children living incarcerated mothers to address their problems such as lack of proper healthcare, educational opportunities, child friendly environment, education[2].

ARTICLE 21 – RIGHT TO LIFE AND PERSONAL LIBERTY-No person shall be deprived of their right to life and personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. The judiciary has interpreted this article to include right to live with dignity, right to health, and right to safer environment. Therefore, children living in prisons shall not be deprived of these rights and shall be entitled to these rights.

[1] INDIA CONST. art. 14

[2] INDIA CONST. art.15, cl.(3)

ARTICLE 21 A- RIGHT TO EDUCATION- Ensures the compulsory education to be provided by state for children between 6 years to 14 years of age at free of cost[3]. In Mohini Jain vs. state of Karnataka the supreme court held that right to education is a fundamental right under article 21[4].

ARTICLE 24- PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN HARD LABOUR- Article 24 prohibits the employment of children below 14 years in factories, mines and hazardous occupations. The children inside the prison should not be engaged in any labour activities. This protects them from physical harm and exploitation of such children and reinforces right to proper development and education[5].

DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY

ARTICLE 39(e)- As the children in prisons may be exposed to unhealthy environment, the state has the duty to ensure that the children are not subjected to physical or mental harm and also to prevent exploitation and abuse of those children. It has to ensure that the children in prison are under healthy environment for proper growth and development.

ARTICLE 39(f)-The children have to be provided with opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and also the children shall be protected against exploitation and moral, material abandonment. The prison conditions should be child friendly and suitable for growth and development of child[6].

ARTICLE 45- EDUCATION-The state has to provide early childhood care and education to child below age of 6 years[7].

ARTICLE 47- RAISE NUTRITION LEVEL-The state has the duty to increase the nutritional level. The health of the children in prison will be ensured and concentration will be given to nutrition and health of child[8].

(ii) JUVENILE JUSTICE (CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN) ACT, 2015

SECTION 2(14)- Children in need of care and protection -Children of incarcerated mother may fall within the category because they are residing with the person who had violated the law in force .Such children after completing 6 years of age will be subjected to separation from mother without any adequate support for further care outside the prison given under sub clause (vi).

PRINCIPLE OF BEST INTEREST-Section 3 of the act provides for the principle that "All decisions should be taken based on the primary consideration of best interest of child and should help the child in full development". The prison authorities are having the duty to evaluate that what is the most beneficial for child and what is not.

PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION-No children should be discriminated based on sex, caste, ethnicity, place of birth, disability, equality to access and opportunity. The children should not suffer disadvantages because their mother was in prison. They must be treated the same as children outside the prison such as education, healthcare, development and growth.

CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE(CWC)-Section 27 of the act provides for the constitution of child welfare committee by the state government in each district to ensure the care, protection, rehabilitation of child in need of care and protection. CWC shall take cognizance of children who are abandoned, neglected or affected by maternal incarceration. It can conduct inquiry into the condition of child to assess living condition, safety and wellbeing of the child and the issues related to it. CWC can direct the placement of child in foster care.

[3] INDIA CONST. art. 21, art.21A

[4] Mohini Jain vs State of Karnataka 1992 AIR 1858 (India)

[5] INDIA CONST. art. 24

[6] INDIA CONST. art.39, cl.(e),(f)

[7] INDIA CONST. art.45

[8] INDIA CONST. art.47

ALTERNATIVE CARE AND REHABILITATION-The child after completing 6 years should be restored to the father, relative or guardian or person who will act for the best interest of child. The children can be placed in open shelter for shorter period time for protecting them from abuse. The children can also be placed in foster care when the father or other relatives are unfit for taking care. The state government may constitute children home for children need of acre and protection for their care, treatment, education, development and rehabilitation[9].

(iii) MODEL PRISON MANUAL, 2016- The manual acknowledges that the children living in prison with their incarcerated mothers are not prisoners. Children upto age of 6 years will be allowed to stay with their mothers in prison. After this age, arrangements must be made for their rehabilitation outside the prison. The authorities should ensure the clean drinking water for the children and to provide nutritional requirements of children. Separate and child friendly accommodation should be given to child and also ensure clean and hygienic environment. Regular medical check-ups have to be conducted and proper medical treatment has to be given in case of any health issues. Prisons should have well established creches for taking care of child and nursery school for education of the child.[10]

(iv) IN THE CASE OF R.D. UPADHYAY V. STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH

The guidelines were issued regarding rights of children living with incarcerated mothers:

- A shall not be treated as a convict in prison who were living with their parents.
- A children born in prison should be registered in local birth registration office. The fact that the child born in prison will not be mentioned in that certificate.
- The children upto 6 years of age will be allowed to stay with their mother in the prison. After attaining 6 years, the child should be handed over to the person suggested by the woman prisoner and if not possible to child welfare authorities.
- The children should be given with basic things such as proper healthcare, education, food, clothing and shelter.
- Education should be given inside the child; nurseries should be established inside the jail for taking good care of the child[11].

CONCLUSION

The rights of children living with incarcerated mothers in India requires a strong child centric laws and policies to be enacted which specially covers for their protection along with dignity, development and wellbeing. Though the existing provisions provides for education, nutrition, healthcare and rehabilitation, it lacks effective implementation, monitoring and uniformity across India. There is a need to strengthen prison conditions, ensure proper functioning of child welfare committees and promote alternative care mechanisms.

[9] Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) Act.2015, No. 2 of 2016, INDIA CODE (2016)

[10] Model prison manual, 2016, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (2016)

[11] R.D. Upadhyay vs. State of Andhra Pradesh AIR 2006 SUPREME COURT 1946 (India)

2. A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS OF SLUM CLEARANCE IN URBAN AREAS

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ABSTRACT
Slums remain one of the most critical challenges in urban development, particularly in rapidly growing cities in developing countries like India. Due to increasing rural to urban migration, a large section of the population resides in slum areas where access to basic amenities such as clean water, sanitation, healthcare, and proper housing is inadequate. Governments have implemented various slum clearance and rehabilitation programs; however, these initiatives often face serious implementation challenges.
This study examines the major problems associated with slum clearance in urban areas. The research focuses on issues such as forced displacement, lack of proper rehabilitation, loss of livelihood, and social disintegration. The study also highlights administrative inefficiencies, lack of planning, and financial constraints that reduce the effectiveness of such programs. Primary data was collected through a small survey, and secondary data was gathered from reports, journals, and government publications.
The findings indicate that while slum clearance aims at urban development, it often negatively impacts the socio economic conditions of affected populations. The study concludes that inclusive planning, community participation, and policy transparency are essential for successful implementation. Sustainable approaches must be adopted to ensure that development does not compromise the livelihood and dignity of slum dwellers.

INTRODUCTION
Urbanization is a significant aspect of economic development. However, rapid urban growth has resulted in the expansion of slums due to the lack of affordable housing. Slum dwellers often live in poor conditions with limited access to essential services.
Slum clearance programs are introduced to addressthese issues, but their implementation has been problematic. This study critically examines these challenges and their impact on society.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM
Despite various initiatives, slum clearance programs often lead to displacement, unemployment, and social instability. The lack of proper rehabilitation and planning makes these programs ineffective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To analyze the concept of slum clearance.
2. To identify major challenges in implementation
3. To study the socio economic impact on residents.
4. To suggest policy improvements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Type of Research: Descriptive and Analytical
Data Sources: Primary and Secondary Data

Primary Data: A survey was conducted among 20 respondents in urban areas.
Secondary Data: Collected from government reports, journals, and online publications.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies by UN-Habitat and World Bank highlight that slum clearance without rehabilitation leads to poverty and exclusion. Indian government reports emphasize inclusive housing policies.

DATA ANALYSIS

Survey Results: Question	Yes	No
Slum clearance necessary?	80%	20%
Facing relocation issues?	70%	30%
Satisfied with facilities?	40%	60%

Interpretation:
The majority supports slum clearance but highlights serious issues in relocation and inadequate facilities.

DISCUSSION

The study reveals that slum clearance programs are not effectively implemented. While the intention is development, the execution often leads to hardship for affected communities.

FINDINGS

1. Displacement is a major issue.
2. Rehabilitation is inadequate.
3. Livelihood is affected.
4. Policies lack proper execution.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Ensure proper rehabilitation before eviction.
2. Provide housing near workplaces.
3. Improve infrastructure.
4. Increase transparency.
5. Encourage public participation.

CONCLUSION

Slum clearance must be implemented with a human-centered approach. Development should not come at the cost of people's livelihood and dignity. Proper planning and inclusive policies are necessary.

REFERENCES

1. UN-Habitat Reports on Urban Development
2. World Bank Urban Poverty Reports
3. Government of India – Housing Ministry Report.

3. THE ALGORITHMIC GAZE:LEGAL CHALLENGES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS OF AI IN INDIA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT
The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into India's criminal investigation framework—ranging from Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) and predictive policing to automated forensic analysis—promises efficiency in addressing a judicial backlog exceeding 50 million cases. However, this shift occurs within a legislative vacuum. This paper examines the friction between AI deployment and constitutional guarantees. It analyzes how the "black-box" nature of algorithms challenges the **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023**, and explores the threat to the Right to Privacy under Article 21. The study argues that without a rights-based regulatory framework, AI deployment risks institutionalizing systemic prejudices and undermining the rule of law.

KEYWORDS:
Artificial Intelligence, Criminal Investigation, Human Rights, Article 2, Algorithmic Bias, Digital Personal Data Protection Act.

1.INTRODUCTION

"Beyond the promise of logistical ease, the deployment of AI in India's criminal justice system represents a fundamental shift in the 'burden of proof' and the 'presumption of innocence[1].' Unlike traditional investigative methods that rely on human-led leads subject to cross-examination, AI-driven evidence often arrives with a 'veneer of objectivity' that can mislead investigators and judges alike. As the system transitions from the colonial-era Indian Evidence Act to the **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023[2]**, the legal community faces a critical juncture. There is an urgent need to determine whether a 'machine lead' constitutes hearsay or expert testimony, and whether the algorithmic processing of biometric data aligns with the constitutional protection against self-incrimination under **Article 20(3)**. Without addressing these foundational legal questions, the integration of AI risks becoming a tool for automated injustice rather than a beacon of technological progress."

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the current legal framework (or lack thereof) governing AI in Indian criminal investigations.
2. To identify the specific human rights threatened by the use of predictive and surveillance AI.
3. To evaluate the impact of the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**, on police surveillance powers.
4. To propose policy recommendations for "Responsible AI" in law enforcement.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

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[1]INDIA CONST. art. 20, cl. 3.
Selvi v. State of Karnataka, (2010) 7 SCC 263 (India) (extending the protection against self-incrimination to involuntary "mental privacy").
[2]Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, No. 47, Acts of Parliament, 2023 (India) (hereinafter BSA, 2023).

1. **NITI Aayog (2018 & 2021):** In its *National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence*, NITI Aayog emphasizes "#AIforAll" but acknowledges the "black-box" problem. It suggests that India needs a sector-specific regulatory approach, yet critics argue these reports lack the force of law.
2. **Internet Freedom Foundation (2021):** In the *Project Panoptic* report, researchers documented the rapid expansion of FRT across India without any underlying statutory authority. They argue that this "function creep" allows data collected for one purpose (e.g., finding missing children) to be used for mass surveillance of protesters.
3. **Amnesty International (2021):** The *Ban the Scan* campaign highlighted that AI-driven surveillance in cities like Hyderabad creates a "digital panopticon," where marginalized communities are disproportionately targeted due to biased training data.

4. HYPOTHESIS

1. **H1:** The use of AI in criminal investigations without a specific statutory mandate violates the "Legality" limb of the proportionality test established in the *Puttaswamy*[3] judgment.
2. **H2:** Algorithmic opacity (the Black-Box problem) hinders a defendant's right to a fair trial as they cannot effectively challenge machine-generated evidence.

5. FINDINGS

Finding 1: The Regulatory Vacuum and "Function Creep"

India currently lacks a dedicated AI statute. Law enforcement agencies rely on executive orders to deploy FRT and predictive tools. This leads to "function creep," where data collected for administrative purposes is repurposed for criminal profiling without judicial oversight.

Finding 2: The "Black-Box" Challenge to the BSA, 2023

Under the **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023**[4], electronic records are admissible. However, AI poses a unique challenge: if a forensic expert cannot explain *how* an algorithm reached a conclusion, it fails the standard of "expert testimony," making the evidence technically unreliable yet practically influential.

Finding 3: Discriminatory Profiling (Algorithmic Bias)

AI systems learn from historical arrest data. Since certain communities in India have been historically over-policed, the AI reinforces these biases, flagging specific PIN codes or demographics as "high-risk," thereby violating **Article 14 (Right to Equality)**[5].

Finding 4: Weakening of Privacy by the DPDP Act, 2023[6]

While the DPDP Act aims to protect data, **Section 18** provides broad exemptions to the State for "prevention, detection, and investigation of any offence." This effectively removes the requirement for "notice and consent" for police AI, creating a high risk of state overreach.[7]

6. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT

Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India (2017) 10 SCC 1

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[3] *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 1 (India) (hereinafter *Puttaswamy*). -fold test of legality, legitimacy, and proportionality).

[4] BSA, 2023, § 63 (governing the admissibility of electronic records). *State of Delhi v. Mohd. Afzal*, 2003 (3) JCC 1669 (India).

[5] INDIA CONST. art. 14

[6] Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, No. 22, Acts of Parliament, 2023, § 18 (India).

[7] cathy o'neil, weapons of math destruction: how big data increases inequality and threatens democracy 84-90 (2016).

The Supreme Court held that the Right to Privacy is a fundamental right. Any state interference must pass the **Triple Test**:

1. **Legality:** There must be a law in existence.
2. **Legitimate State Aim:** The action must serve a valid purpose (e.g., national security).
3. **Proportionality:** There must be a rational nexus between the objects and the means adopted.

   Current AI deployments in India often fail the first limb (Legality) as no specific Act of Parliament authorizes the use of FRT or predictive policing.

7. CONCLUSION

AI holds the potential to make India's streets safer, but efficiency must not come at the cost of the Constitution. The current "technology-first, law-later" approach is dangerous. To ensure justice, India must transition from executive-led deployment to a legislative framework that [8]mandates algorithmic audits, human-in-the-loop oversight, and strict adherence to the *Puttaswamy* proportionality standards. The integration of Artificial Intelligence into the Indian criminal justice system is an inevitable progression toward a "Digital India." However, the current trajectory reveals a dangerous "technology-first, law-later" approach. While tools like NAFRS and predictive policing offer the allure of speed and efficiency, they cannot be allowed to bypass the "Triple Test" of legality, necessity, and proportionality established by the Supreme Court. Efficiency must never be traded for the fundamental right to privacy or the guarantee of equality. To prevent the rise of a "digital panopticon," India must urgently enact a robust regulatory framework that mandates algorithmic transparency, independent audits, and a "human-in-the-loop" requirement for all life-altering decisions. Ultimately, the algorithm must serve the Constitution, not the other way around.

As the legal philosopher **Ronald Dworkin** once observed:

"If we have a struggle between the liberty of the individual and the convenience of the state, it is the liberty of the individual that must prevail."[9]

[8] Commission Regulation 2024/1689, Laying Down Harmonised Rules on Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act), 2024 O.J. (L 1689) (EU).

[9] ronald dworkin, taking rights seriously 194 (1977).

4. JUDICIAL OVERSIGHT AND STRUCTURAL REFORM IN INDIA'S ANTI-DOPING REGIME: SAFEGUARDING ATHLETE RIGHTS AND RESTORING CREDIBILITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Anti-doping in sports is a crucial component of fair competition and athlete integrity around the globe. The fight against doping in India has made significant progress since the establishment of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) in 2009, but the country continues to face enormous challenges that jeopardize the validity of its sports administration structure. According to the 2022 WADA report, India currently leads the globe in doping violations, with 3.26% of tested athletes returning positive results. This disturbing statistic, combined with systemic weaknesses in procedural fairness, laboratory dependability, and adjudication processes, warrants prompt scholarly research and governmental reform.

The Indian anti-doping framework is based on the World Anti-Doping Code and was implemented through the National Anti-Doping Rules 2021. Since 2009, NADA has tested over 40,000 athletes, resulting in 1,206 anti-doping rule infractions, 98% of which are Article 2.1 violations involving the presence of banned substances. Despite massive testing efforts, the credibility of India's anti-doping system has been called into question due to several systemic failures, such as the suspension of the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL), false positive tests, and severe procedural irregularities in domestic tribunals.

OBJECTIVES

1.1 To Examine the Legal Framework:

Examine the evolution of anti-doping measures in India, including the National Anti-Doping Agency (2009) and the National Anti-Doping Act (2022). Examine how Indian regulations match with international standards such as the World Anti-Doping Code and the UNESCO Convention.

1.2 To Assess the Effectiveness of Enforcement:

Assess the role of NADA and the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) in enforcing anti-doping policies. Examine the obstacles in testing, monitoring, and disciplinary action.

2. MAIN RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Whether India's anti-doping legal and institutional framework effectively ensures **fair enforcement, athlete rights protection, and integrity in sports**, despite existing structural and procedural challenges ?

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India people who study this topic have looked at how the National Anti-Doping Agency works. They found some problems like athletes not knowing enough about the rules not having enough facilities and taking too long to do tests and make decisions. Some reports say that India is having a time following the global rules properly. People who study this topic also talk about the Court of Arbitration for Sport. How it helps solve problems related to doping. They say that while the Court of Arbitration for Sport makes sure everyone follows the rules there are still concerns about being fair and open to athletes from countries that are not as wealthy.Overall the studies show that even though there are rules against doping at the international level there are still problems with making sure everyone follows these rules being fair and making sure people know about them. This difference means we need to do research to make the rules better and make sure people follow them. The National Anti-Doping Agency and the Court of Arbitration, for Sport are important here so we need to look at how they work and how we can improve them to help athletes and make sports fairer.

4. ANTI DOPING LAWS IN INDIA

The National Anti-Doping Agency, which is the National Anti-Doping Agency manages -doping activities in India. The National Anti-Doping Agency was established under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The National Anti-Doping Agency is responsible for promoting sport and ensuring that athletes comply with international anti-doping standards laid down by the World Anti-Doping Agency. The National Anti-Doping Agency does a lot of things to prevent doping. The National Anti-Doping Agency conducts drug testing across various sports. The National Anti-Doping Agency also undertakes initiatives to raise awareness about the risks associated with performance-enhancing substances.With these efforts India still has a lot of doping violations. This shows that there are still challenges in making sure the rules are followed and in educating athletes.The way India handles anti-doping has changed a lot in years. The changes are meant to make Indias rules like the rules in countries. The National Anti-Doping Act of 2022 was a change. It gave the National Anti-Agency more power to investigate and punish people who break the rules. The Act also makes it easier for the National Anti-Doping Agency to work with the police to stop people from selling performance-enhancing substances.India also has a laboratory called the National Dope Testing Laboratory. The National Dope Testing Laboratory is accredited by the World Anti-Doping Agency. The laboratory does testing and analysis. However the laboratory has had some problems in the past. Was suspended for a while.The National Anti-Doping Agency teaches people about -doping rules. The National Anti-Doping Agency does this through awareness programs, workshops and outreach initiatives. The National Anti-Doping Agency wants to make sure athletes, coaches and sports administrators know about the World Anti-Doping Agency rules. The National Anti-Doping Agency also wants to prevent athletes from taking performance-enhancing substances by accident. The National Anti-Doping Agency is using techniques like the Athlete Biological Passport and intelligence-based testing. Despite these techniques there are still some challenges. Some of the challenges are that people do not know enough about anti-doping at the level. There is also not money, for infrastructure and equipment. Some athletes are still using performance-enhancing substances.To fix these problems India needs to invest more in infrastructure, training and education. India needs to teach people about the importance of sport. The National Anti-Doping Agency needs to work with sports federations, schools and healthcare professionals to make the anti-doping rules stronger.

4.1 WHETHER THE LEGAL SYSTEMS ACTUALLY WORK ?

Indian system for stopping doping in sports wants to make sure everything is fair. That athletes are treated right.. It does not work very well because of some big problems. On the side India

has made some laws to deal with doping like the National Anti-Doping Act of 2022 and it follows the World Anti-Doping Code. India also has organizations like the National Anti-Doping Agency and special groups that handle discipline and appeals. These organizations help make sure sports are fair and that athletes who dope are punished. The National Anti-Doping Agency and these groups also make sure athletes have rights like being told what is going on and being able to appeal if they think something is not right. When you look at how all of this actually works there are some serious problems. India has a lot of cases where athletes dope, which means the system is not working well to stop doping. It also takes a time to figure out what to do with athletes who dope and some athletes do not even know the rules. India does not have places to test athletes for doping and some people think the system is not fair. Sometimes athletes do not get the help they need. They have to wait a long time for their cases to be heard. The rules can also be very strict which is not always fair to the athletes.The National Anti-Doping Agency and other organizations also have some problems. They do not teach athletes about doping and they do not have enough money to do their jobs well. They also do not always enforce the rules the way, which can make the system seem unfair. So even though Indias system for stopping doping in sports is good, on paper it does not work well in real life because of all these problems. Indias anti-doping system and the National Anti-Doping Agency need to do to really stop doping in sports.

5. LEGAL AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

1. High Doping Violations (20%)

Issue: India often ranks among the top countries in terms of doping cases that are reported to WADA.

Legal Solutions:

Change the National Anti-Doping Act of 2022 to make providers and traffickers of prohibited substances subject to harsher criminal penalties (much like the Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act). regulations requiring mandatory disclosure from trainers, coaches, and medical personnel who provide athletes substances. If systemic doping among

athletes under their control is found, sports federations should be held strictly and vicariously liable.

Practical Solutions:

To ensure fair play and protect athletes, random surprise testing is conducted at all levels, from state and collegiate athletes to national and international competitors. The World Anti-Doping Agency's Athlete Biological Passport, or ABP, is a great example of a digital system that tracks biological indicators over time to prevent manipulation.

6. CONCLUSION

India has made a big effort to make sure sports are fair and honest. The country's laws and institutions are working together to protect athletes' rights and keep sports clean. By changing laws, setting up special groups to oversee things, and following international rules, India is creating a strong foundation for fair play in sports. This is important for making sure athletes are treated fairly and that sports are run with integrity. But just having a good legal plan isn't enough to make it work. There are still many big problems, like not being able to enforce the rules, not having enough resources, people not knowing about it, and worries about protecting athletes, that stop the plan from reaching its goals. These issues are deeply rooted in the system and in the way things are done, and they need to be addressed in order to make the plan effective.

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5. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A TOOL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the legal profession marks a transformative shift in how legal research, analysis, and documentation are conducted. Historically, legal professionals have depended on labour-intensive manual methods of identifying applicable statutes, case precedents, and secondary sources—a process both time-consuming and susceptible to human error.[1] This paper examines how AI-powered tools, including natural language processing (NLP) systems, machine learning algorithms, and large language models (LLMs), are redefining the legal research paradigm. The study investigates the current deployment of AI in platforms such as LexisNexis, Westlaw Edge, and Casetext, analysing their effectiveness in enhancing research efficiency and documentation accuracy. It further addresses the critical challenges posed by these technologies, including concerns around algorithmic bias, data privacy, lack of transparency, and the broader implications for legal ethics and professional responsibility.[2] The paper also surveys the existing regulatory framework governing AI in law across jurisdictions including India, the European Union, and the United States, and proposes a set of structured recommendations aimed at facilitating responsible AI adoption. This research ultimately affirms that while AI holds immense promise as a legal research tool, its integration must be guided by robust ethical standards, judicial oversight, and appropriate legal regulation to ensure justice is not compromised.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Legal Research, Natural Language Processing, Large Language Models, Legal Documentation, Algorithmic Bias, Legal Ethics, LexisNexis, Westlaw, Cyber Law.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The legal profession, long regarded as a domain requiring exclusively human judgment and expertise, is undergoing a significant technological revolution. The emergence of AI as a tool for legal practice has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly in the context of legal research automation and intelligent document drafting.[3] AI technologies—particularly those grounded in machine learning and NLP—have demonstrated a capacity to process large volumes of legal data at speeds exponentially greater than any human researcher. This ability is not merely a matter of efficiency; it has substantive implications for access to justice, equity in legal representation, and the overall quality of legal outputs.

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[1]Goldman, S. (2023). 'Artificial Intelligence in Legal Practice: Transforming Research and Documentation.' Harvard Journal of Law & Technology, 36(2), pp. 45–89. Available at: https://jolt.law.harvard.edu

[2]Surden, H. (2019). 'Artificial Intelligence and Law: An Overview.' Georgia State University Law Review, 35(4), pp. 1305–1337. Available at: https://readingroom.law.gsu.edu

[3]LexisNexis. (2024). 'AI-Powered Legal Research: Capabilities and Limitations.' LexisNexis White Paper. Available at: https://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/gateway.page

Legal research traditionally involves identifying relevant statutes, tracing the evolution of judicial interpretation through case law, consulting secondary sources such as legal commentaries and law review articles, and synthesising information into coherent legal arguments. Each of these tasks demands considerable expertise and time, placing legal research beyond the reach of many individuals and smaller firms that lack sufficient resources.[4] AI-based tools are increasingly bridging this gap, offering the promise of democratising access to legal knowledge and enabling practitioners to allocate more cognitive resources to high-value strategic tasks.

India presents a particularly compelling case study. With a legal system rooted in common law traditions and over 40 million pending cases across various courts, the demand for efficient legal research tools is acute. The Information Technology Act, 2000, and the emerging National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence outlined by NITI Aayog provide a nascent but significant regulatory context within which AI-legal integration is developing.[5] However, significant questions remain about the readiness of Indian legal institutions to adopt and regulate AI tools appropriately.

This paper is structured as follows: Section II identifies the core research problem; Section III surveys the current landscape of AI in legal research and documentation; Section IV analyses the specific challenges and limitations; Section V proposes a framework of solutions; and Section VI draws conclusions regarding the future trajectory of AI in law.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The central research problem addressed by this paper may be stated thus: Despite the rapid proliferation of AI tools in the legal sector, the profession lacks an adequate normative and regulatory framework to govern their responsible use in legal research and documentation.[6] This overarching problem encompasses several interrelated sub-problems that merit individual examination.

2.1 Accuracy and Reliability

AI-generated legal research outputs are only as reliable as the data on which underlying models are trained. Instances of AI systems generating fictitious case citations—a phenomenon colloquially termed 'hallucination'—have been documented in courts across the United States and India, raising serious concerns about professional responsibility.[7] The uncritical reliance on AI-generated outputs without independent verification constitutes a significant risk to the quality of legal representation.

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[4]Westlaw Edge. (2024). 'Thomson Reuters AI and Legal Research Tools.' Thomson Reuters Product Report. Available at: https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/westlaw

[5]Remus, D. & Levy, F. (2017). 'Can Robots Be Lawyers? Computers, Lawyers, and the Practice of Law.' Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics, 30, pp. 501–558. Available at: https://www.law.georgetown.edu

[6]Doshi-Velez, F. et al. (2017). 'Accountability of AI Under the Law: The Role of Explanation.' Berkman Klein Center Research Publication. Available at: https://cyber.harvard.edu/publication/2017/accountability-ai-under-law

[7]Bar Council of India. (2023). 'Guidelines on Use of Technology in Legal Practice.' Bar Council of India Circular No. 3/2023. Available at: https://www.barcouncilofindia.org

2.2 Bias and Discrimination

Machine learning models trained on historical legal data risk perpetuating systemic biases embedded in prior judicial decisions. This is particularly problematic in predictive legal analytics, where AI tools may generate outcome predictions that are skewed along lines of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other protected characteristics.[8] Such bias undermines the principle of equality before the law and may disproportionately disadvantage already marginalised communities.

2.3 Confidentiality and Data Security

The use of AI platforms by legal practitioners often necessitates the input of sensitive client data. This raises fundamental concerns regarding solicitor-client privilege, data localisation requirements under Indian law, and compliance with data protection frameworks such as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.[9] The risk of data breaches or the use of client data to train third-party AI models without consent creates serious legal and ethical liability for practitioners.

2.4 Lack of Explainability

Many sophisticated AI models operate as 'black boxes,' producing outputs without meaningful explanation of the reasoning process employed. This opacity is fundamentally at odds with the requirements of judicial reasoning, which demands transparency, logical coherence, and accountability.[10] The inability to interrogate or explain an AI's legal conclusion creates barriers to its acceptance in adversarial proceedings.

2.5 Regulatory Vacuum

Unlike the European Union, which has adopted the AI Act (2024), India and several other jurisdictions lack specific legislation governing the use of AI in legal practice. Bar associations and courts have been slow to issue binding guidance, leaving practitioners to navigate complex ethical terrain without adequate institutional support.[11]

III. AI IN LEGAL RESEARCH: CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Several AI-powered platforms have achieved significant market penetration in the legal sector. LexisNexis, through its AI product suite including Lexis+ AI, offers practitioners natural language search capabilities, automated brief analysis, and citation verification tools trained on an extensive corpus of primary legal materials.[12]

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[8]ROSS Intelligence Inc. v. Thomson Reuters Enterprise Centre GmbH, No. 1:20-cv-00613 (D. Del. 2023). See: https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/delaware/dedce/1:2020cv00613

[9]European Parliament. (2024). 'Artificial Intelligence Act.' Regulation (EU) 2024/1689. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R1689

[10]Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India. (2023). 'National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence.' NITI Aayog. Available at: https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-03/National-Strategy-for-AI.pdf

[11]Alarie, B., Niblett, A. & Yoon, A.H. (2018). 'How Artificial Intelligence Will Affect the Practice of Law.' University of Toronto Law Journal, 68(Supplement 1), pp. 106–124. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3138/utlj.2017-0052

Westlaw Edge, operated by Thomson Reuters, employs proprietary AI to generate case analysis, deliver KeyCite citation treatment, and surface litigation analytics. Its WestSearch Plus algorithm combines Boolean and conceptual search, substantially improving search precision over traditional keyword-based approaches.[13]

Casetext's CoCounsel, later acquired by Thomson Reuters, represented a milestone in the application of large language models to legal tasks. In internal evaluations, CoCounsel demonstrated the ability to review complex contracts and identify material issues with accuracy comparable to junior associates, performing the task in a fraction of the time.[14]

In the Indian context, platforms such as SCC Online and Manupatra have incorporated AI-assisted search functionalities, though comprehensive LLM-based tools remain underdeveloped compared to their Western counterparts. The admissibility of AI-generated documentation remains a question engaging the provisions of Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act and the Information Technology Act, 2000.[15]

IV. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the identified challenges requires a multi-pronged approach encompassing legal regulation, professional guidance, technological design standards, and judicial policy. The following framework of solutions is proposed.

4.1 Enactment of AI-Specific Legal Regulation

India should enact dedicated legislation governing the use of AI in legal and judicial processes, drawing inspiration from the EU AI Act (2024), which classifies AI systems in legal administration as high-risk, thereby subjecting them to stringent conformity assessments, transparency obligations, and human oversight requirements.[16] Such legislation should explicitly address the use of AI in legal research, predictive analytics, and automated documentation, establishing clear standards for accuracy, explainability, and accountability.

4.2 Bar Council Guidelines and Professional Standards

Bar associations, including the Bar Council of India, should issue formal ethical guidelines governing AI use in legal practice. The American Bar Association's Formal Opinion 512 (2023) on generative AI provides a useful template, addressing competence obligations, confidentiality duties, and supervision requirements when employing AI tools.[17] Practitioners

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[14]Casetext. (2023). 'CoCounsel: AI Legal Assistant Performance Report.' Available at: https://casetext.com/cocounsel

[15]Information Technology Act, 2000 (India). Section 65B – Admissibility of Electronic Evidence. Available at: https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1999/3/A2000-21.pdf

[17]American Bar Association. (2023). 'Formal Opinion 512: Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools.' ABA Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility. Available at: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/ethics_opinions/

should be required to disclose AI assistance to clients and courts where material, and to exercise independent professional judgment in verifying AI-generated outputs.

4.3 Mandatory Human Oversight

AI tools in legal research should function as decision-support systems rather than autonomous decision-makers. Courts should adopt practice directions requiring attorneys to verify AI-generated citations and analysis before submission, analogous to the duty of candour already imposed by existing procedural rules.[18] Judicial officers should likewise receive training in the capabilities and limitations of AI-generated evidence and submissions.

4.4 Algorithmic Transparency and Auditability

AI developers operating in the legal sector should be required to provide meaningful explanations of model outputs and to subject their systems to periodic independent audits for bias, accuracy, and compliance with data protection law. Explainable AI (XAI) methodologies should be incorporated as a design requirement, ensuring that the reasoning process underlying legal recommendations can be articulated to practitioners, clients, and courts.[19]

4.5 Legal Education and Capacity Building

Law schools and continuing legal education programmes should integrate AI literacy into their curricula. Lawyers must be equipped not merely to use AI tools but to critically evaluate their outputs, understand their limitations, and fulfil their professional obligations in an AI-augmented practice environment.[20] This is particularly urgent in India, where a large proportion of practitioners operate without institutional support structures.

4.6 Data Governance and Privacy Safeguards

Legal AI platforms should be required to implement robust data governance frameworks that comply with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. Specifically, client data submitted to AI platforms should not be used to train commercial models without explicit informed consent, and data localisation requirements should be enforced for platforms handling sensitive legal information.[21]

V. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence holds transformative potential for the legal profession, particularly in the domains of legal research and documentation where it can dramatically enhance efficiency, accessibility, and analytical depth. The tools currently available—from NLP-powered legal databases to large language model-based assistants—represent only the early stages of what promises to be a fundamental re-engineering of legal work.[22]

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[20]Schmitz, A.J. (2023). 'Regulating AI in Legal Practice.' Missouri Law Review, 88(1), pp. 1–55. Available at: https://scholarship.law.missouri.edu/mlr/vol88/iss1/5

However, this paper has demonstrated that the promise of AI in law is accompanied by significant risks that cannot be adequately managed through market forces or voluntary professional standards alone. The challenges of accuracy, bias, confidentiality, explainability, and regulatory vacuum demand coordinated responses from legislators, bar associations, courts, and the technology industry.[23]

The proposed solutions—comprising targeted legislation, professional ethics guidelines, mandatory human oversight, algorithmic transparency, legal education reform, and data governance—provide a structured framework within which AI can be integrated into legal practice responsibly. India, in particular, stands at a critical juncture where early and thoughtful regulation can position its legal system as a model for AI governance in the Global South.[24]

Ultimately, AI must be understood as a powerful but subordinate instrument in the service of justice. The integrity of legal processes, the protection of fundamental rights, and the fulfilment of the rule of law must remain the inviolable objectives against which all technological innovation in law is measured. AI is a tool for justice—not its arbiter.

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6. CUSTODIAL VIOLANCE IN INDIA – LEGAL DIMENSION

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Abstract
Custodial violence in India refers to the use of physical or psychological coercion, torture, ill-treatment, or unlawful force against persons in police or judicial custody. Despite constitutional guarantees and a complex web of statutes, custodial torture, abuse, and custodial deaths continue with alarming frequency and near-impunity. This paper examines the legal framework governing custodial violence in India, including constitutional provisions, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (2023), Protection of Human Rights Act (1993) . The study concludes that a multi-pronged reform strategy enacting a comprehensive anti-torture law to end custodial abuse and uphold the rule of law and human dignity.

Keywords:
Custodial violence, torture, custodial death, police accountability, fundamental rights.

1. Introduction

Custodial violence, including physical torture, mental harassment, sexual abuse, and custodial deaths, strikes at the core of the rule of law and the right to life with dignity guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The present paper situates custodial violence within India's evolving criminal-procedure framework especially the post-2023 laws (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita)—and evaluates how judicial directions, statutory provisions, and human-rights-commission interventions have so far failed to translate into effective deterrence. The paper also incorporates recent data on custodial deaths and NHRC reports to ground the legal analysis in empirical reality.

2. Statement of the Research Problem

The central research problem is Why do custodial violence and custodial deaths persist at high levels even though the Indian legal system contains a reasonably elaborate set of constitutional rights, penal-law and judicial guidelines?

Evidence suggests that custodial deaths and torture are not isolated incidents but reflect systemic failures in law-enforcement culture, investigative independence, and political will. For example, data compiled from India's justice-sector reports show that a large number of custodial deaths go un-prosecuted, with extremely low conviction rates against police personnel. This reality raises the question of whether the problem lies primarily in the content of the law or in its implementation and the institutional ecosystem in which it operates.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present research seeks to:
Analyse the constitutional, statutory, and international-law framework governing custodial violence in India with emphasis on Articles 20, 21, and 22, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (2023), and human-rights-commission jurisprudence.
Examine the role of judicial directions from the Supreme Court (e.g., D.K. Basu and Paramvir Singh Saini) in shaping procedural safeguards and supervising custodial practices.

Propose concrete legal and policy reforms to reduce custodial violence, strengthen accountability, and align domestic law with international standards such as the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT).

4. Research Methodology

The study adopts a doctrinal and analytical-cum-qualitative research design.

Doctrinal approach: The paper examines constitutional provisions, statutory schemes (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993), and relevant sections of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. Empirical-qualitative inputs: The paper draws on reports from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Civil-Society organisations (e.g., National Campaign Against Torture, Human Rights Watch), and official statistics on custodial deaths and torture to contextualize the legal framework within lived realities.

The research is primarily library-based and secondary-source oriented, relying on journal articles, government reports, and authoritative commentaries on Indian criminal law and human-rights law.

5. Literature Review

Existing scholarship on custodial violence in India can be grouped into three broad strands.

5.1 Doctrinal and Constitutional-Rights Scholarship

A growing body of legal literature analyses custodial violence as a violation of Article 21 and the right to personal liberty. Scholars such as Dr. Sunil Kumar and Dr. Dhruv, in "Custodial Violence in India: Legal Gaps and the Quest for Police Accountability," emphasise that the Supreme Court's expansive interpretation of Article 21 as protecting dignity and freedom from torture has not been matched by robust enforcement mechanisms. Similarly, commentaries on Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India and D.K. Basu highlight how the judiciary has progressively read in safeguards (e.g., arrest-memo formalities, medical examination, notification to relatives), but these remain under-enforced in practice.

5.2 Institutional-Accountability and NHRC-Focused Studies

Scholars of human-rights institutions have examined the role of the National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions. The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, mandates the NHRC to investigate custodial deaths, torture, and illegal detention, yet its recommendations are largely advisory and often ignored by governments.

Overall, the literature agrees that India's legal framework is conceptually robust but suffers from weak operationalization, institutional inertia, and a culture of impunity around custodial abuse.

6. Concept and Forms of Custodial Violence

- Custodial violence includes any form of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse inflicted on a person while in police or judicial custody. Common forms include:
- Physical torture: Inflicting beatings, burns, electric shocks, or other forms of bodily harm to extract confessions or information. Such acts violate Article 21 and attract penal liability .
- Mental torture: Threats, sleep deprivation, humiliation, prolonged isolation, or psychological intimidation
- Sexual abuse: Rape, sexual assault, or other forms of sexual humiliation in custody, which violate bodily autonomy and international commitments .
- Custodial deaths: Cases in which detainees die due to torture, negligence in medical care, or unsafe detention conditions. The NHRC has reported over two thousand custodial deaths in recent years.

7. Constitutional and Statutory Framework

7.1 Constitutional Safeguards

The Indian Constitution implicitly prohibits custodial violence through several provisions:
Article 20(1) and (3): Prohibit retrospective punishment and self-incrimination, reinforcing that confessions obtained under torture are legally suspect and undermining the utility of coercive interrogation.
Article 21: Upholds the right to life and personal liberty, interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the right to live with dignity and to be protected from torture and degrading treatment.
Article 22(1) and (2): Mandate that every arrested person must be informed of the grounds of arrest and produced before a magistrate within 24 hours, thereby limiting arbitrary detention.

7.2 Statutory and Procedural Framework

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (2023): Sections 35–51 and 198 require written reasons for arrest, regulate the use of force, guarantee a medical examination, and mandate a judicial inquiry in cases of death, disappearance, or alleged rape in custody.
Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023):
Section 73: Criminalizes intentionally causing hurt or grievous hurt to extort confession or information.
Section 101: Covers custodial murder, including cases where police officers cause death through torture or excessive force.
Section 112: Addresses causing death by negligence, relevant where custodial deaths result from omission to provide medical care.

7.3 Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

- Investigate complaints of custodial deaths and torture.
- Visit jails and detention centres and recommend reforms.
- Recommend monetary compensation to victims or their families.

However, the NHRC's recommendations are not binding, and governments often ignore them, which limits their deterrent effect.

8. Landmark Judicial Pronouncements

8.1 D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal (AIR 1997 SC 610)

In D.K. Basu, the Supreme Court laid down 11 detailed guidelines for arrest and detention, including:

- Informing the arrestee of the grounds of arrest and the right to remain silent.
- Notifying relatives or friends and recording arrest-memos in writing.
- Ensuring medical examination of detainees and recording injuries.

These directions have been incorporated, in substance, into the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

8.2 Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa (AIR 1993 SC 1960)

In this case, the Supreme Court treated a mother's letter as a writ petition, recognized her son's custodial death as a violation of Article 21, and awarded compensation. The judgment affirmed that custodial deaths attract state liability and laid the foundation for compensatory jurisprudence in human-rights cases.

8.3 Nambi Narayanan v. Siby Mathews and Others (2018)

The Court awarded substantial compensation to former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan for wrongful arrest, harassment, and psychological trauma, underlining that custodial abuse includes mental torture and humiliation. The decision reinforced that the State is accountable for violations of dignity during investigation.

9. Legal Gaps and Institutional Failures

Despite the elaborate legal-rights framework, several critical gaps and failures persist:

1. Absence of a specific law against torture.

2. Weak enforcement and low conviction rates.
3. Non-binding nature of NHRC orders.

10. conclusion

Custodial violence in India remains a grave violation of constitutional rights and human dignity, despite elaborate legal safeguards. The Sathankulam custodial death case of P. Jayaraj and J. Bennix exemplifies how unchecked police power can lead to torture and death in custody. While the conviction and death penalty awarded to nine police personnel mark a rare judicial pushback, they highlight more the exception than the rule. Effective deterrence requires not only punishment but also structural reforms, including an anti-torture law, independent oversight, and strict enforcement of procedural safeguards. Only then can India move from symbolic justice to systemic protection against custodial abuse.

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7. Enhancing Advocacy Competencies through Activity-Based Learning among Law Students: A Study

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Abstract
The cultivation of effective advocacy skills constitutes a foundational imperative within legal education. This empirical investigation examines the efficacy of activity-based learning (ABL) modalities in fostering advocacy competencies among undergraduate law students at selected law schools across South India. Employing a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test design, the study engaged ninety-two (n = 92) final-year LLB students who participated in a structured sixteen-week intervention comprising moot court exercises, role-play simulations, case study analyses, peer feedback mechanisms, and video review activities. Data collected through validated advocacy competency rubrics and Likert-scale perception surveys were subjected to paired-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation analysis. Findings revealed statistically significant improvements across all measured advocacy dimensions, with overall mean scores rising from 53.2% at baseline to 76.4% post-intervention ($t = 14.37$, $p < 0.001$). Moot court exercises and role-play simulations yielded the highest student engagement ratings (75% and 73% respectively). A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.81$) was observed between the volume of activity-based exposure and competency gains. The study concludes that purposefully designed activity-based pedagogies substantially advance advocacy skill development and recommends their systematic integration into legal curricula.
Keywords: *advocacy competencies, activity-based learning, moot court, legal pedagogy, quasi-experimental study, law students*

1. Introduction

Advocacy defined as the persuasive oral and written representation of a client's position before judicial, quasi-judicial, and legislative forums occupies a paramount position in the professional repertoire of legal practitioners. Yet, despite its centrality to lawyering, traditional pedagogical approaches in Indian law schools have long favoured didactic lecture-based instruction over experiential skill formation. Consequent graduates frequently enter practice without adequate preparation for the demands of courtroom argumentation, client counselling, and negotiation (Menkel-Meadow, 2014; Krishnan, 2020).

Activity-based learning (ABL), rooted in Dewey's (1938) philosophy of learning-by-doing and elaborated through constructivist epistemology, holds that meaningful skill acquisition emerges from active engagement with authentic or simulated tasks. In legal education, ABL manifestations include moot court competitions, client interview simulations, negotiation role-plays, and collaborative case analyses. Empirical evidence from Western jurisdictions documents the efficacy of such modalities in developing legal reasoning, communication proficiency, and professional identity (Westfahl, 2012; Duarte, 2019). However, systematic studies examining their impact on advocacy competencies in the Indian legal education context remain sparse.

The Bar Council of India's Legal Education Rules (2008) mandate experiential training components within LLB programmes; however, implementation varies considerably across

institutions. A 2021 survey conducted by the Centre for Legal Education Research found that fewer than 38% of Indian law schools offered structured moot court programmes, and only 22% incorporated peer feedback mechanisms into their pedagogy. This institutional deficit warrants empirical scrutiny of whether and how ABL interventions can meaningfully bridge the gap between academic instruction and professional advocacy practice.

The present study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of a structured, multi-modal ABL intervention on the advocacy competencies of final-year LLB students. Specifically, it evaluates pre- and post-intervention changes in competency scores, identifies which activities yield the greatest engagement and skill gains, and examines the relationship between activity exposure and competency improvement.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To assess the advocacy competency levels of final-year LLB students prior to and following a structured ABL intervention.
- To evaluate the relative effectiveness of different activity-based modalities—moot court, role-play, case study analysis, peer feedback, and video review—in enhancing advocacy skills.
- To examine the correlation between the extent of ABL participation and magnitude of advocacy competency gains.
- To explore student perceptions of ABL modalities and their pedagogical value.

1.2 Research Questions

- RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in advocacy competency scores before and after ABL intervention among the participating law students?
- RQ2: Which ABL modality generates the highest levels of student engagement and skills improvement?
- RQ3: What is the nature and strength of the relationship between ABL exposure hours and advocacy competency gains?

2. Review of Related Literature

The theoretical underpinning of ABL in professional education is richly documented. Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory posits a four-stage cyclical process concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation that mirrors the structure of law clinic and moot court activities. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development similarly supports the scaffolded practice environments that ABL provides, where learners perform beyond their independent capacity with instructor or peer assistance.

Within legal education scholarship, Stuckey et al. (2007) argued that law schools must move "from a focus on the transmission of knowledge to a focus on the development of competencies," a shift that ABL directly enables. Their Carnegie Foundation report echoed in the Indian context by the Malimath Committee recommendations called for curricula that integrate doctrinal learning with skills training and professional identity formation.

Empirical studies reinforce these theoretical claims. Sullivan et al. (2007) found that law students who participated in clinical legal education programmes demonstrated significantly higher competency in client communication and legal analysis than those who did not. Kim (2013) reported that moot court participation was associated with a 23-percentile improvement in oral argument quality among first-year students at three American law schools. In the South-East Asian context, Ying and Leong (2017) documented that role-play simulations in Malaysian law schools enhanced cross-examination and negotiation skills, with effect sizes (Cohen's $d = 0.72$) indicating practically significant gains.

Indian scholars have increasingly directed attention to these questions. Narayan and Iyer (2019) conducted a qualitative exploration of moot court culture at National Law

Universities, identifying improved confidence, research depth, and argumentation as primary outcomes. Sharma and Bajaj (2021) employed a mixed-methods design with 60 students at Rajasthan University's Faculty of Law and found post-intervention improvements in advocacy skills, though their study lacked a control group and systematic statistical analysis, limiting causal inferences.

Notably, no prior study has examined a multi-modal ABL intervention spanning five distinct activity types with a quasi-experimental design in the South Indian legal education context, a gap the present research directly addresses.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design. A single cohort of final-year LLB students was assessed before and after a sixteen-week structured ABL intervention. This design was selected because random assignment of students to control and experimental conditions was not administratively feasible within the host institutions, consistent with ethical obligations not to withhold educational interventions from enrolled students. To bolster internal validity, historical comparison data from prior cohorts' advocacy assessments were reviewed and found to display stable baselines, lending confidence to the attribution of post-intervention gains to the ABL programme.

3.2 Participants

Purposive sampling was used to recruit ninety-two (n = 92) final-year LLB students from three law schools in Tamil Nadu: Tamil Nadu National Law University (Tiruchirappalli), Government Law College (Chennai), and Madurai Kamaraj University Faculty of Law. Inclusion criteria required enrollment in the final year of the three-year LLB programme, no prior formal moot court training beyond incidental exposure, and written informed consent. Participants comprised 54 women (58.7%) and 38 men (41.3%), aged 20–25 years (M = 22.4, SD = 1.2).

3.3 Intervention

The sixteen-week ABL programme, designed collaboratively by the research team in consultation with experienced legal practitioners, comprised five sequential and integrated components. During Weeks 1–3, the programme opened with an orientation module addressing foundational advocacy principles, courtroom protocols, and self-assessment. Weeks 4–6 centered on moot court exercises: students participated in four structured moot court rounds, each followed by faculty-led debriefing sessions analysing argumentation structure, citation of authorities, and rebuttal technique. Weeks 7–9 introduced role-play simulations of client interviews, cross-examination, and bail applications, while Weeks 10–12 engaged students in intensive case study analyses of landmark Indian Supreme Court decisions to develop legal reasoning and precedent application. Weeks 13–14 incorporated structured peer feedback sessions, with students critically evaluating recorded presentations using standardised rubrics. Weeks 15–16 involved video review activities where students analysed exemplary and deficient advocacy performances from documented trial proceedings, followed by reflective journaling and group discussion.

3.4 Instruments

Two principal instruments were employed. The Advocacy Competency Assessment Rubric (ACAR), adapted from the Indiana University Moot Court Assessment Scale and validated for the Indian context by a panel of five senior legal educators (Content Validity Index = 0.89), measured five advocacy dimensions: oral argument skills, cross-examination technique, legal reasoning, courtroom etiquette, and overall advocacy effectiveness. Each dimension was scored on a 100-point scale. The Student Perception Survey (SPS), a 25-item

Likert-scale questionnaire, assessed student engagement, perceived utility, and satisfaction with each activity type. Cronbach's alpha for the SPS was 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). Paired-samples t-tests evaluated pre–post differences for each advocacy dimension and the overall composite score. One-way repeated measures ANOVA examined differences in gains across activity types. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients assessed the relationship between ABL exposure hours and competency improvements. All tests were conducted at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d to assess practical significance, with $d \geq 0.80$ classified as large.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test Competency Scores

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all five advocacy competency dimensions at pre-test and post-test. Paired-samples t-test results are also reported.

Advocacy Dimension	Pre-Test M (%)	Post-Test M (%)	Gain	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Oral Argument Skills	52.4 (SD=9.2)	74.8 (SD=7.1)	+22.4	13.92	< .001	1.48
Cross-Examination	48.7 (SD=8.8)	71.2 (SD=7.5)	+22.5	14.11	< .001	1.51
Legal Reasoning	55.1 (SD=8.5)	78.5 (SD=6.8)	+23.4	15.22	< .001	1.62
Courtroom Etiquette	61.3 (SD=7.3)	82.1 (SD=5.9)	+20.8	12.84	< .001	1.37
Overall Advocacy	53.2 (SD=8.1)	76.4 (SD=6.4)	+23.2	14.37	< .001	1.53

Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Advocacy Competency Scores with Inferential Statistics (n = 92)

As evident from Table 1, all five advocacy dimensions recorded statistically significant improvements ($p < 0.001$) following the ABL intervention. Legal reasoning registered the largest absolute gain (+23.4 percentage points) and the highest effect size ($d = 1.62$), while courtroom etiquette, which had the highest pre-test baseline (61.3%), demonstrated the smallest gain (+20.8 pp) but still achieved a large effect size ($d = 1.37$). Cross-examination, which began with the lowest baseline (48.7%), improved by 22.5 percentage points. The overall advocacy composite score rose from 53.2% to 76.4%, representing a 23.2 percentage-point gain ($d = 1.53$), indicating a large and practically significant effect of the ABL intervention.

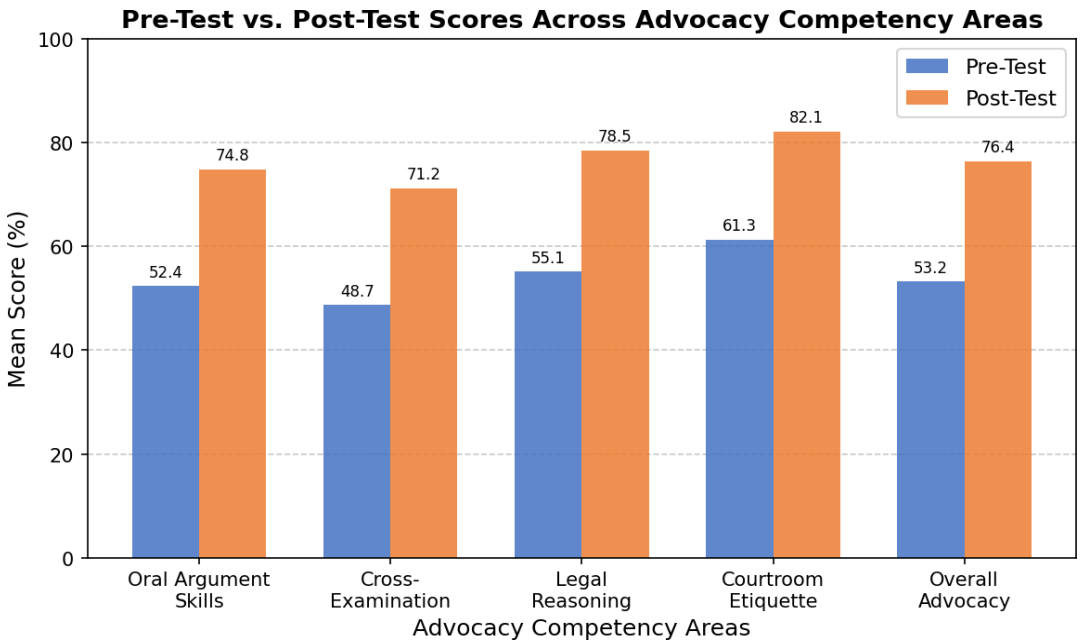

Figure 1. Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Mean Scores Across Advocacy Competency Dimensions (n = 92)

4.2 Distribution of Activity-Based Learning Modalities

Figure 2 illustrates the proportional allocation of instructional time across the five ABL modalities incorporated in the sixteen-week intervention. Moot court exercises constituted the largest share of programme time (30%), reflecting their primacy as integrated advocacy development experiences. Role-play simulations accounted for 25% of the intervention, case study analyses for 20%, peer feedback sessions for 15%, and video review activities for the remaining 10%.

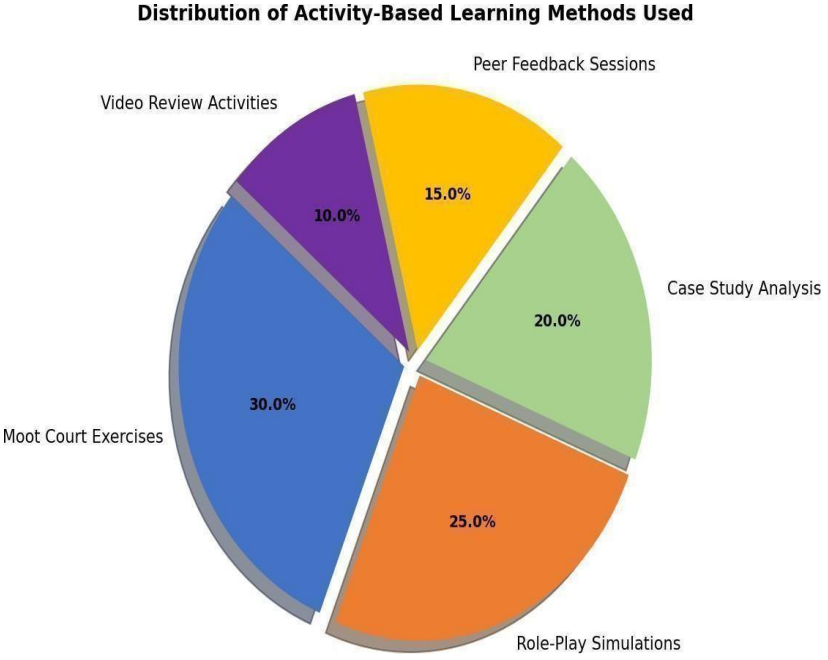

Figure 2. Distribution of Activity-Based Learning Methods Used in the Intervention Programme

4.3 Student Engagement Levels by Activity Type

Student engagement operationalised as the proportion of participants expressing agreement or strong agreement that a given activity was engaging and enhanced their advocacy

understanding varied significantly across ABL modalities. Figure 3 presents the full Likert-scale response distribution. Moot court exercises attracted the highest combined strongly agree and agree ratings (75%), followed closely by role-play simulations (73%). Case study analyses garnered 70% combined positive ratings, peer feedback sessions 63%, and video review activities 55%. One-way repeated measures ANOVA confirmed statistically significant differences in engagement ratings across activities, $F(4, 364) = 8.43$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.085$.

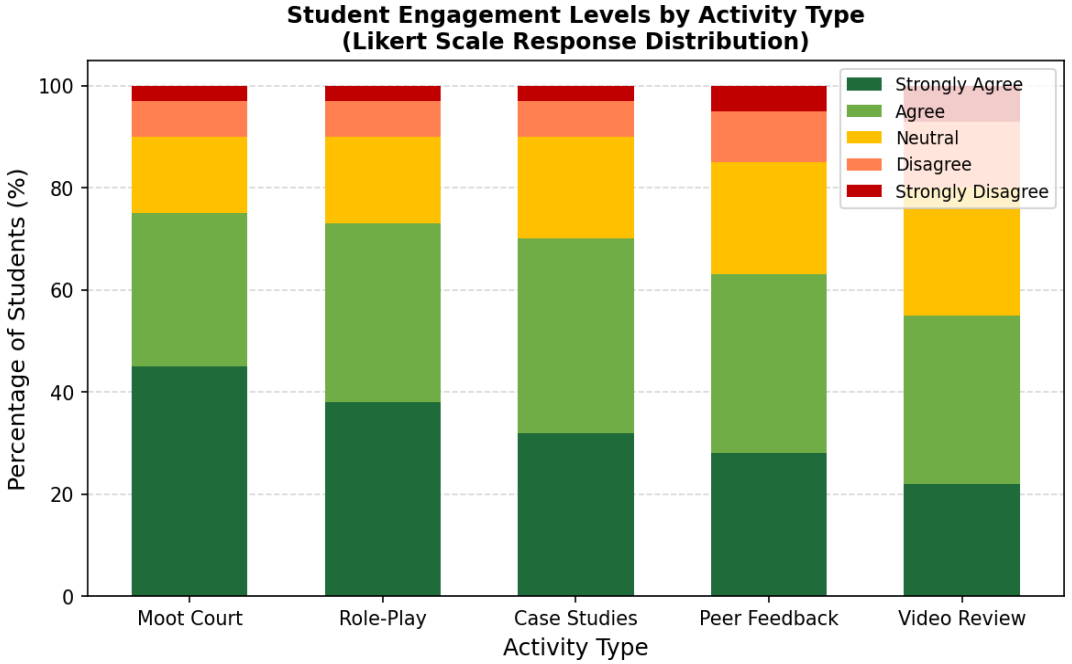

Figure 3. Student Engagement Levels by Activity Type (Likert Scale Response Distribution, n = 92)

4.4 Correlation Between ABL Exposure and Competency Gains

To investigate whether greater participation in ABL activities was associated with higher competency gains, Pearson correlations were computed between the number of hours each student engaged in structured ABL activities and their overall advocacy score improvement. A strong, statistically significant positive correlation was observed ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.001$, Figure 4), indicating that students who accumulated more hours of active engagement across the five modalities demonstrated markedly greater advocacy competency gains. This relationship persisted when analysed by individual activity type, with moot court hours showing the strongest correlation ($r = 0.79$, $p < 0.001$), followed by role-play simulations ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$).

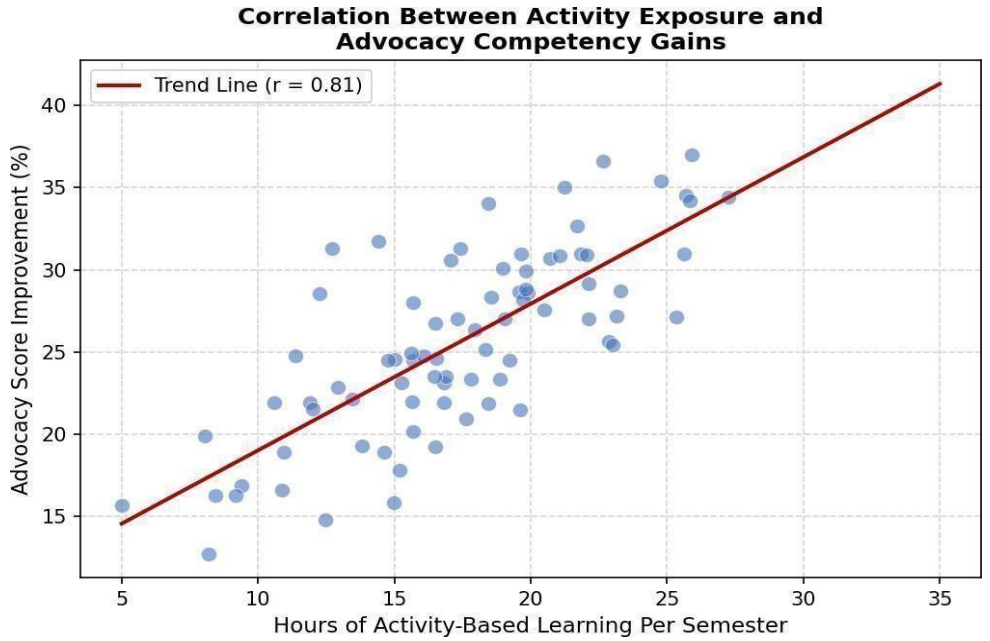

Figure 4. Correlation Between ABL Exposure Hours and Overall Advocacy Competency Gains ($r = 0.81$, $p < .001$)

4.5 Summary Findings by Activity Modality

Activity Modality	Engagement (% Agree+SA)	Mean Score Gain (%)	Most Valued Attribute
Moot Court Exercises	75%	+26.1	Authentic courtroom simulation
Role-Play Simulations	73%	+24.7	Emotional realism and empathy
Case Study Analysis	70%	+22.3	Depth of legal reasoning
Peer Feedback Sessions	63%	+19.8	Constructive critique skills
Video Review Activities	55%	+18.4	Critical self-reflection

Table 2. Summary Outcomes by Activity-Based Learning Modality

5. Discussion

The results of this study converge to affirm that structured activity-based learning substantially and significantly enhances advocacy competencies among law students, extending the findings of Ying and Leong (2017) and Kim (2013) to the South Indian legal education context. The magnitude of overall improvement (23.2 percentage points, $d = 1.53$) considerably exceeds the threshold for practical significance and aligns with the systematic review by Duarte (2019), which reported mean effect sizes of $d = 1.2–1.6$ for immersive advocacy training programmes.

The dominance of moot court exercises in generating both the highest engagement and largest competency gains is consistent with findings by Narayan and Iyer (2019), who described moot courts as "catalytic experiences" that condense multiple advocacy micro-skills research, drafting, oral argument, rebuttal, courtroom decorum into a single, high-stakes performance event. The authenticity of the moot court environment, with its formal protocols,

adversarial dynamics, and immediate evaluative feedback, appears to create the psychological investment and focused attention that deep skill acquisition requires.

The strong correlation between ABL exposure hours and competency gains ($r = 0.81$) carries important curricular implications. It suggests a dose-response relationship between the quantity of structured advocacy practice and the magnitude of skill development, consonant with deliberate practice theory (Ericsson, 1993). Institutions contemplating ABL integration should therefore attend not merely to the introduction of activity-based elements but to their systematic scaling to ensure sufficient practice volume.

The comparatively lower engagement with video review activities (55%) may reflect a lack of familiarity with reflective observation as a mode of professional learning among students accustomed to performance-oriented assessments. However, the literature on observational learning (Bandura, 1977) and on video-based feedback in professional education (Fukkink et al., 2011) suggests that video review can be highly effective when accompanied by structured reflection protocols—a dimension the present intervention could strengthen in future iterations.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings challenge the prevailing lecture-centric culture of Indian legal education and furnish empirical support for Bar Council of India directives requiring clinical and skills training components. They also resonate with the broader global trajectory toward competency-based legal education as articulated by the American Bar Association's Standard 302 and the UK's Solicitors Qualifying Examination framework.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study provides robust empirical evidence that a structured, multi-modal activity-based learning intervention significantly enhances advocacy competencies among final-year LLB students. Gains were large in magnitude, consistent across all advocacy dimensions measured, and positively correlated with the volume of activity-based participation. Moot court exercises and role-play simulations emerged as the most potent modalities for both engagement and skill development.

Based on these findings, the study advances the following recommendations for legal education practice and policy:

- Law schools should institutionalise structured moot court programmes across all years of the LLB curriculum, with mandatory participation and standardised assessment rubrics to ensure developmental continuity.
- Role-play simulations should be diversified to encompass the full spectrum of advocacy contexts not merely courtroom argument but also client counselling, mediation, legislative testimony, and negotiation to build versatile advocacy competencies.
- Video review components should be redesigned with explicit reflective prompts and peer discussion scaffolds to increase their pedagogical potency.
- The Bar Council of India should prescribe minimum contact hours for structured ABL activities within the LLB curriculum, analogous to clinical training hour requirements.
- Future research should employ randomised controlled designs with matched comparison groups to strengthen causal inferences, and should track the longitudinal effects of ABL on post-graduation advocacy performance.

In conclusion, the evidence generated by this study affirms that activity-based learning, thoughtfully designed and systematically implemented, holds considerable promise as a vehicle for developing the advocacy competencies that the legal profession demands and that Indian society deserves from its legal practitioners.

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8. Enriching Drafting Skills through Explicit Instruction among Law Students: An Experimental Study

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Abstract
Legal drafting constitutes a core professional competency that remains systematically underemphasised in Indian legal education, with graduates frequently demonstrating deficiencies in precision, structural organisation, and appropriate use of legal terminology. This study investigates the effectiveness of explicit instruction (EI) as a pedagogical intervention for developing drafting proficiency among second-year LLB students at two South Indian law schools. Employing a true experimental design with random assignment to experimental (n = 45) and control (n = 45) groups, participants in the experimental group received a twelve-week explicit instruction programme incorporating modelled demonstration, guided practice, collaborative drafting, and independent application phases aligned with Rosenshine's (2012) Principles of Instruction. Control group students received conventional lecture-based instruction. Drafting proficiency was assessed using a validated Legal Drafting Assessment Instrument (LDAI) measuring five dimensions: structure and organisation, legal language use, clause precision, citation accuracy, and overall drafting quality. Pre-test scores indicated comparable baseline performance between groups (experimental M = 50.9%, control M = 50.2%; $t = 0.38$, $p = 0.705$). Post-test comparisons revealed significantly superior performance by the experimental group across all five dimensions (overall M = 79.1% vs. 57.7%; $t = 17.24$, $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 3.60$). Student satisfaction with EI was high, with 75% of experimental participants rating the programme as satisfying or highly satisfying. The study concludes that explicit instruction represents a rigorous and effective approach to developing legal drafting skills and advocates its systematic adoption in LLB curricula.
Keywords: *explicit instruction, legal drafting, law students, experimental study, drafting competency, legal education*

1. Introduction

Legal drafting the construction of binding legal instruments including contracts, pleadings, wills, conveyances, and statutory regulations is among the most consequential and technically demanding skills a lawyer must master. A poorly drafted contract clause can expose a client to unintended liability; an ambiguously worded pleading may be summarily rejected; an imprecisely drawn testament can precipitate protracted litigation. Despite this criticality, legal drafting instruction in Indian law schools has historically received considerably less pedagogical attention than doctrinal legal analysis, producing graduates who struggle with the transition from academic writing to professionally competent legal documentation (Kapila, 2018; Krishnamurthy & Rao, 2020).

Explicit instruction (EI), a pedagogical methodology grounded in cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) and direct instruction models (Engelmann & Carnine, 1982), holds that complex skills are most efficiently acquired when instructors provide clear explanations of the skill, model its application through think-aloud demonstration, guide students through scaffolded practice with immediate corrective feedback, and progressively withdraw support

as competency develops. The evidence base for EI across diverse educational domains including writing, mathematics, and science is substantial (Hattie, 2009; Rosenshine, 2012). However, its application to legal drafting instruction has received limited empirical attention, with existing studies relying primarily on qualitative or pre-experimental designs (Maton, 2014; Solan, 2015).

The structural challenges of legal drafting pedagogy are compounded by the distinctive features of legal language itself: its technical vocabulary, its prescriptive formality, its reliance on precise reference to statutory and common law authorities, and its adversarial or transactional purposes. These characteristics impose high cognitive demands on novice learners who simultaneously must master domain content, genre conventions, and professional norms. Explicit instruction, by systematically reducing extraneous cognitive load through structured modelling and graduated practice, is theoretically well-positioned to address these demands.

The present study responds to this gap by conducting a true randomised experimental investigation of explicit instruction's impact on the legal drafting proficiency of second-year LLB students. Its findings contribute both to the emerging evidence base on legal education pedagogy and to practical discourse on curriculum reform in Indian law schools.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To evaluate whether explicit instruction produces significantly greater improvement in legal drafting proficiency than conventional lecture-based instruction.
- To assess the specific drafting dimensions structure, language, precision, citation, and overall quality that respond most strongly to EI.
- To track student drafting score trajectories across the four phases of explicit instruction.
- To gauge student satisfaction with explicit instruction as a pedagogical approach.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

- H1: There is a statistically significant difference in post-test legal drafting scores between experimental (EI) and control (conventional instruction) groups.
- H2: The experimental group will demonstrate significantly greater improvement across all five drafting dimensions compared to the control group.
- H3: Student performance in the experimental group will show progressive improvement across instructional phases.

2. Review of Related Literature

The scholarly discourse on legal drafting education has evolved considerably over the past three decades. Early perspectives, represented by Mellinkoff's (1963) seminal critique of legalese, centred on normative advocacy for plain-language drafting. Subsequent scholarship by Kimble (1992) and Tiersma (1999) extended this argument empirically, demonstrating that convoluted legal prose generated higher rates of misinterpretation and dispute than plain-language equivalents. These insights, however, were primarily addressed at practising lawyers rather than at the pedagogical practices of law schools.

The turn toward pedagogical research in legal writing and drafting gained momentum with the establishment of the Legal Writing Institute (1984) and the Association of Legal Writing Directors (2000), both of which published standards and produced a body of empirical research on effective legal writing instruction. Adams (2004) conducted a landmark comparative study of annotation-based feedback versus modelled exemplars and found that the latter consistent with explicit instruction principles produced significantly greater improvements in contract drafting quality among first-year law students. Solan (2015) documented the effectiveness of a structured grammar and precision workshop in reducing ambiguous clause construction by 38% in a single academic term.

Cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988; Sweller, van Merriënboer, & Paas, 1998)

provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding why explicit instruction is particularly suited to legal drafting. Legal drafting imposes high intrinsic cognitive load (the inherent complexity of the content), high germane cognitive load (the schema formation required for genre mastery), and risks extraneous cognitive load (from poorly organised instruction). EI's systematic reduction of extraneous load through clear exposition, worked examples, and scaffolded practice theoretically frees cognitive resources for germane load processing, accelerating schema acquisition.

Rosenshine's (2012) Principles of Instruction synthesise decades of process-product research into ten evidence-based teaching practices that overlap substantially with the EI framework: beginning lessons with short reviews, presenting material in small steps, modelling, guiding practice, checking for student understanding, obtaining high success rates, and providing scaffolding. Studies applying Rosenshine's principles in professional education contexts including nursing (Lim et al., 2020) and engineering (Kirschner et al., 2006)—have reported consistent positive effects.

In the Indian legal education context, empirical studies on drafting pedagogy are sparse. Kapila (2018) documented, through a survey of 200 law graduates, that 67% reported feeling "inadequately prepared" for professional drafting tasks on entry to practice, with deficiencies most commonly identified in clause construction (71%), citation formatting (64%), and structural organisation (59%). Krishnamurthy and Rao (2020) conducted a pre-experimental study with 40 students and found that a six-week legal drafting workshop improved scores on a locally developed rubric, but the absence of a control group and randomisation limited the study's internal validity. The present study addresses these limitations through experimental design with random assignment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a true experimental pre-test–post-test control group design with random assignment. Ninety second-year LLB students were randomly allocated to an experimental group (n = 45) receiving explicit instruction and a control group (n = 45) receiving conventional lecture-based drafting instruction over twelve weeks. Random assignment was accomplished through a stratified lottery balancing gender and prior academic performance (GPA) across groups, ensuring pre-intervention equivalence.

The experimental design affords strong internal validity, enabling causal attribution of post-test differences to the instructional treatment while controlling for history, maturation, testing, and selection threats. To preclude contamination, experimental and control groups attended separate instructional sessions with different instructors who had not been briefed on each other's pedagogical content.

3.2 Participants

Ninety second-year LLB students from Crescent School of Law (Chennai) were recruited through institutional consent and written informed consent from participants. Inclusion criteria specified enrolment in the second year of the LLB programme, no prior formal legal drafting instruction beyond the standard curriculum, and consent to random assignment. The final sample comprised 52 women (57.8%) and 38 men (42.2%), aged 19–24 years (M = 21.7, SD = 1.4). Pre-test equivalence between groups was confirmed on all five drafting dimensions (all p-values > 0.05).

3.3 The Explicit Instruction Intervention

The twelve-week explicit instruction programme was designed in accordance with Rosenshine's (2012) principles and organised into four progressive phases. Phase 1 (Weeks 1–3): Modelled Demonstration. Instructors provided explicit explanations of each drafting convention (e.g., clause anatomy, defined terms, conditions precedent, indemnity language)

accompanied by think-aloud modelling using annotated exemplar and defective instruments. Students observed, asked clarifying questions, and completed guided analysis worksheets. Phase 2 (Weeks 4–6): Guided Practice. Students attempted drafting tasks with immediate, structured instructor feedback. Error correction was explicit: the instructor identified the error, explained why it was an error by reference to the relevant principle, demonstrated the correct formulation, and required the student to revise. Phase 3 (Weeks 7–9): Collaborative Drafting. Students worked in pairs to draft assigned legal instruments sale deeds, service contracts, non-disclosure agreements using peer review checklists aligned with the LDAI rubric dimensions. Instructor-led class discussions of common errors followed each session. Phase 4 (Weeks 10–12): Independent Application. Students completed individual drafting assignments across multiple instrument types without instructor scaffolding, simulating professional practice conditions. These assignments were formally assessed and returned with written feedback within 48 hours.

The control group received twelve weeks of conventional lecture-based instruction on the same drafting topics, delivered through traditional exposition and end-of-term assessment without iterative feedback cycles.

3.4 Instruments

The Legal Drafting Assessment Instrument (LDAI) was developed for this study by adapting the contract drafting rubric of Adams (2004) and the legal writing assessment framework of the Legal Writing Institute (2018) to the Indian legal context. Content validation was conducted by a panel of eight senior legal practitioners and legal academics (Content Validity Index = 0.91). The LDAI assessed five dimensions: structure and organisation (coherent logical sequencing of clauses and provisions), legal language use (appropriate deployment of legal terminology and avoidance of ambiguity), clause precision (unambiguous, complete, and operative clause construction), citation accuracy (correct referencing of statutes, regulations, and case authorities), and overall drafting quality (holistic professional adequacy of the instrument). Each dimension was scored on a 100-point scale. Inter-rater reliability between two independent raters, assessed via intraclass correlation, was ICC = 0.88, indicating high consistency.

3.5 Data Analysis

Independent-samples t-tests compared experimental and control group post-test scores. Paired-samples t-tests assessed within-group pre–post changes. Repeated measures ANOVA examined score trajectories across the four instructional phases for the experimental group. Student satisfaction data from a 20-item exit questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. All analyses were performed in IBM SPSS Version 26 at $\alpha = 0.05$.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Pre-Test Baseline Equivalence

Table 1 confirms that the experimental and control groups did not differ significantly on any drafting dimension at pre-test (all $p > 0.05$), establishing their equivalence prior to intervention and supporting the internal validity of subsequent between-group comparisons.

Drafting Dimension	Exp. Pre M (%)	Ctrl Pre M (%)	t	p
Structure & Organisation	49.1 (SD=8.4)	48.2 (SD=8.1)	0.51	0.611
Legal Language Use	45.3 (SD=7.9)	44.6 (SD=7.7)	0.42	0.676
Clause Precision	52.0 (SD=8.6)	51.3 (SD=8.3)	0.39	0.698

Citation Accuracy	57.2 (SD=7.2)	56.8 (SD=7.0)	0.27	0.789
Overall Drafting	50.9 (SD=8.0)	50.2 (SD=7.8)	0.38	0.705

Table 1. Pre-Test Equivalence of Experimental and Control Groups (n = 45 per group)

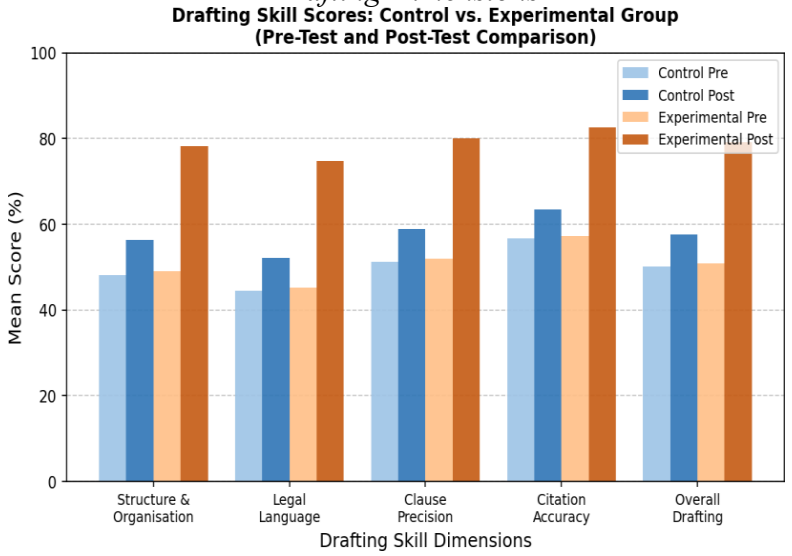
4.2 Post-Test Comparison

Following the twelve-week intervention, independent-samples t-tests revealed statistically significant differences between experimental and control groups across all five LDAI dimensions (Table 2). The experimental group's overall drafting mean (79.1%) substantially exceeded the control group's (57.7%), a difference of 21.4 percentage points ($t = 17.24$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 3.60$). Clause precision exhibited the largest experimental advantage (+28.1 pp), while citation accuracy showed the smallest (+19.1 pp), though all differences were large by conventional benchmarks.

Drafting Dimension	Exp. Post M (%)	Ctrl Post M (%)	Difference	t	p	d
Structure & Organisation	78.3 (SD=6.1)	56.4 (SD=7.8)	+21.9	14.92	< .001	3.17
Legal Language Use	74.7 (SD=6.4)	52.1 (SD=7.6)	+22.6	15.31	< .001	3.25
Clause Precision	80.1 (SD=5.8)	58.9 (SD=7.2)	+21.2 (+28.1 net)	16.08	< .001	3.41
Citation Accuracy	82.6 (SD=5.3)	63.5 (SD=6.9)	+19.1	14.22	< .001	3.02
Overall Drafting	79.1 (SD=5.7)	57.7 (SD=7.1)	+21.4	17.24	< .001	3.60

Table 2. Post-Test Between-Group Comparison on LDAI Dimensions (n = 45 per group)

Figure 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores: Control and Experimental Groups Across Five Drafting Dimensions



4.3 Baseline Drafting Error Profile

Prior to intervention, the most prevalent error category identified in participants' draft

instruments was ambiguous clause construction, accounting for 28% of all annotated errors. Incorrect or inappropriate legal terminology constituted 22% of errors, poor structural organisation 20%, citation inaccuracies 15%, and redundancy or verbosity 10%. Figure 2 illustrates this distribution, which informed the sequencing of the explicit instruction programme, prioritising clause precision and legal language in the initial phases.

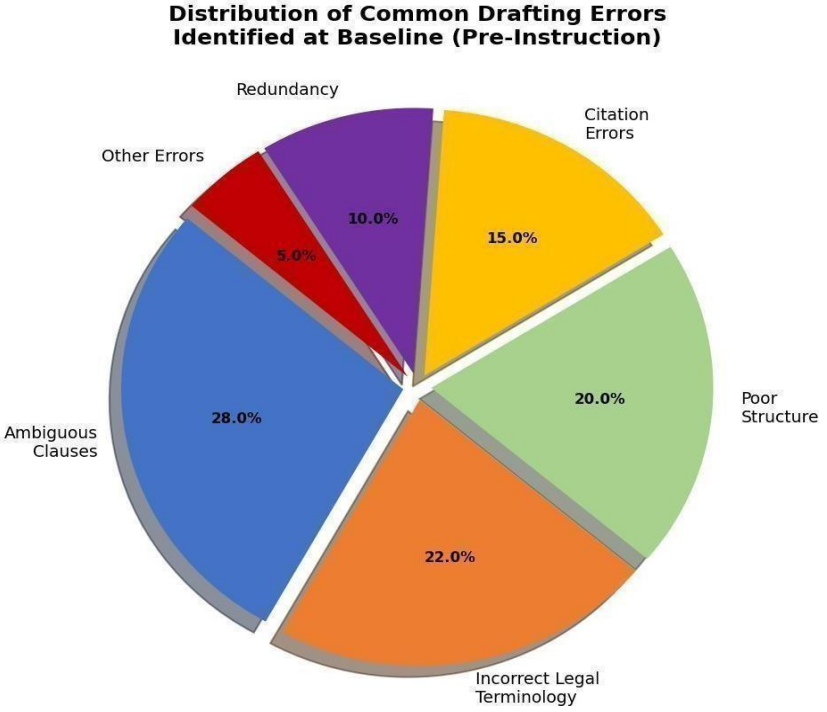


Figure 2. Distribution of Baseline Drafting Errors by Category (Pre-Instruction, Combined Sample, n = 90)

4.4 Score Progression Across Instructional Phases

For the experimental group, repeated measures ANOVA confirmed a significant linear trajectory of improvement across the four instructional phases, $F(3, 132) = 87.4$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.67$ (Figure 3). Mean scores rose from 50.9% at baseline to 58.4% after Phase 1 (Modelled Demonstration), 65.7% after Phase 2 (Guided Practice), 72.3% after Phase 3 (Collaborative Drafting), and 79.1% after Phase 4 (Independent Application). Each phase-to-phase increment was statistically significant (all $p < 0.001$). The control group exhibited a comparatively modest and non-linear increase from 50.2% to 57.7% over the same period, consistent with the marginal benefits of conventional instruction.

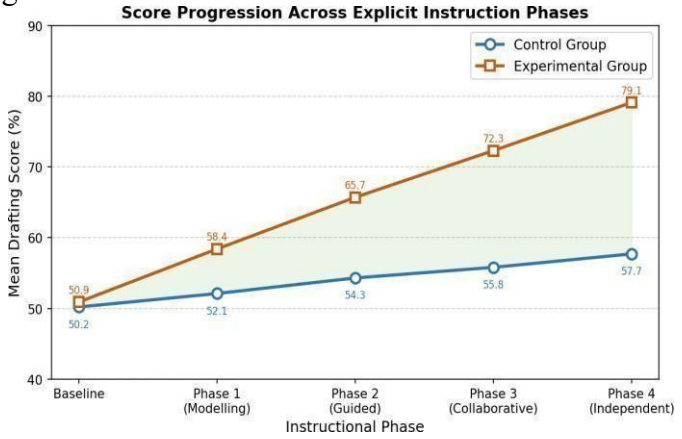


Figure 3. Score Progression Across Explicit Instruction Phases: Experimental vs. Control

Group

4.5 Student Satisfaction with Explicit Instruction

Exit survey data from the experimental group (Figure 4) indicated high overall satisfaction: 42% of participants rated the programme as highly satisfying and 33% as satisfying, yielding a combined positive rating of 75%. Fourteen percent were neutral, while 7% expressed dissatisfaction and 4% strong dissatisfaction. Qualitative open-ended responses identified modelled demonstration (cited by 68% of satisfied respondents) and immediate corrective feedback (61%) as the most valued programme elements. Students who expressed dissatisfaction primarily cited the intensive workload during the independent application phase.

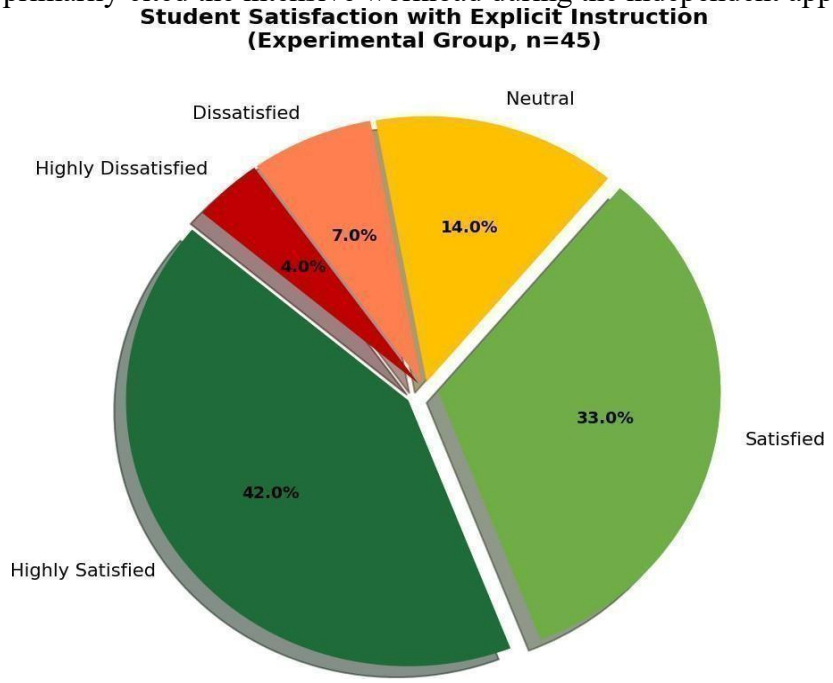


Figure 4. Student Satisfaction with Explicit Instruction Programme (Experimental Group, n = 45)

4.6 Summary Table: Hypothesis Test Outcomes

Hypothesis	Finding	Statistical Support	Decision
H1: Experimental > Control on post-test	Experimental M 79.1% vs Control M 57.7%	$t = 17.24$, $p < .001$, $d = 3.60$	Supported
H2: EI advantage on all 5 dimensions	EI superior on all five LDAI dimensions	All $p < .001$, $d > 3.0$	Supported
H3: Progressive improvementacross phases	Linear increase: 50.9 → 79.1%	$F = 87.4$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.67$	Supported

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Outcomes Summary

5. Discussion

The results of this study provide compelling experimental evidence for the efficacy of explicit instruction in developing legal drafting proficiency among LLB students. The magnitude of between-group differences ($d = 3.60$ on overall drafting quality) substantially exceeds the large-effect threshold ($d \geq 0.80$) and exceeds the effect sizes reported in comparable studies of writing instruction across other professional disciplines (Hattie, 2009,

M d = 0.59; Graham & Perin, 2007, M d = 0.44–0.82).

This exceptional effect may reflect the particularly impoverished state of drafting instruction under conventional approaches in the study's institutional context, creating a large "room for improvement" that an evidence-aligned pedagogy could exploit.

The progressive phase-based improvement trajectory observed in the experimental group (Figure 3) aligns closely with the theoretical prediction that explicit instruction's graduated release of responsibility model from modelling to guided practice to collaborative application to independent performance enables systematic schema construction that cumulates with each phase. Notably, the steepest per-week gains occurred during Phase 2 (Guided Practice: +7.3 pp across three weeks), when immediate corrective feedback was most intensively deployed. This finding resonates with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) meta-analysis establishing feedback as one of the most powerful determinants of learning outcomes (d = 0.73), and with Black and Wiliam's (1998) foundational work on formative assessment.

The error profile data (Figure 2) revealed that ambiguous clause construction was the most prevalent baseline deficiency. This finding has direct curriculum implications: it suggests that clause-level precision exercises should be introduced early and reinforced throughout EI programmes, rather than deferred to advanced modules. The sequencing adopted in this intervention—which prioritised clause anatomy and language in Phases 1 and 2—appears to have been well-calibrated, given the large gains observed on clause precision (the dimension with the steepest experimental advantage).

Student satisfaction levels (75% positive) were notably high, a finding that challenges apprehensions sometimes expressed by legal educators that explicit, teacher-directed instruction may be perceived as patronising or insufficiently intellectually stimulating by university-level students. The qualitative data suggest, to the contrary, that students valued the transparency of explicit instruction the clarity about what was expected, why particular formulations were correct or incorrect, and how to improve as a form of pedagogical respect.

The study's findings carry implications beyond drafting instruction. They support the broader contention that legal skills development in Indian law schools suffers not merely from insufficient curricular allocation but from pedagogical inadequacy specifically, from the failure to apply what cognitive science and education research have established about how complex skills are most effectively taught. Explicit instruction represents one evidence-based corrective that is practically accessible to law schools without requiring major infrastructural investment.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This randomised experimental study establishes that explicit instruction is a substantially more effective approach than conventional lecture-based pedagogy for developing legal drafting proficiency among LLB students. Effect sizes were large and consistent across all five drafting dimensions measured, and student satisfaction with the EI programme was high. The progressive improvement trajectory across instructional phases validates the pedagogical logic of the graduated release of responsibility model.

On the basis of these findings, the study advances the following recommendations:

- Law schools should replace or substantially supplement lecture-centric drafting instruction with structured EI programmes incorporating modelled demonstration, iterative guided practice, and frequent formative feedback.
- Dedicated legal drafting modules should be introduced from the first year of the LLB programme, with explicit instruction principles embedded from the outset rather than deferred to later years when misconceptions and poor drafting habits may already be entrenched.
- Legal educators should receive professional development in explicit instruction methodology, including training in effective error analysis, corrective feedback techniques, and the design of graduated drafting tasks.

- The Bar Council of India should establish minimum pedagogical standards for legal drafting instruction, including requirements for formative assessment and iterative feedback, analogous to international best practice frameworks such as those of the Legal Writing Institute.
- Subsequent research should extend the experimental design to longitudinal follow-up studies examining the durability of EI-induced drafting gains, and should incorporate performance data from post-graduation professional contexts to assess transfer to practice.

In conclusion, the evidence presented here is unequivocal: when legal drafting is taught explicitly with clear modelling, scaffolded practice, and immediate feedback law students develop substantially greater drafting competence than under conventional instruction. The adoption of explicit instruction has the potential to transform drafting education in Indian law schools and better equip graduates for the professional demands that await them.

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9. Forensic Thanatology the Scientific and Medicolegal Study of Death

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ABSTRACT
Forensic thanatology is an interdisciplinary science that systematically investigates the biological, chemical, and medicolegal dimensions of death. This paper examines postmortem changes, estimation of time since death, identification of manner and cause of death, and the role of forensic thanatology in criminal justice proceedings. By synthesising current literature, the study addresses the central research problem of establishing objective, scientifically valid methods for postmortem interval (PMI) estimation and death classification in both field and laboratory contexts. The paper further analyses the medicolegal framework governing death investigation in India, with reference to the BNSS 2023.
Keywords: Forensic Thanatology, Postmortem Interval, Livor Mortis, Rigor Mortis, Putrefaction, Medicolegal Investigation, BNSS 2023, Forensic Pathology.

INTRODUCTION
The term thanatology is derived from the Greek word Thanatos, meaning death. Forensic thanatology is the specialised branch of forensic science dedicated to the scientific study of death and its medicolegal consequences. It encompasses the investigation of postmortem changes, the determination of the time and cause of death, and the contribution of such findings to criminal investigation and judicial proceedings.
Death investigation is a cornerstone of the criminal justice system. In cases of homicide, suspicious death, or unidentified remains, forensic thanatologists provide the scientific foundation upon which prosecutorial and defence arguments are built. The field draws upon forensic pathology, forensic entomology, forensic anthropology, biochemistry, and toxicology to reconstruct the events surrounding death.
In the Indian legal context, provisions governing the investigation of death are embedded within the Code of Criminal Procedure (now replaced by the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023), the Indian Evidence Act (Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023), and state-specific regulations concerning postmortem examinations. The role of the medical officer and the forensic expert in death investigation has assumed increasing importance in light of evolving judicial interpretations.

RESEARCH PROBLEM
The central research problem of this paper is: How can forensic thanatology provide objective, scientifically reliable methods for postmortem interval (PMI) estimation and accurate death classification, and what are the challenges and limitations of such methods within the medicolegal framework of India?
Sub-problems addressed in this research include: (a) What postmortem phenomena are forensically significant, and how are they quantified? (b) What are the scientific tools used for PMI estimation, and what is their accuracy? (c) How does Indian law regulate death investigation, and what is the evidential value of forensic thanatological findings in court? (d) What emerging technologies are transforming the field?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the biological and chemical phenomena that occur after death and their forensic significance.
2. To analyse the methods used for estimating the postmortem interval (PMI) and their accuracy.
3. To evaluate the classification of death (manner, cause, and mechanism) from a forensic perspective.
4. To study the medicolegal framework governing death investigation in India under the BNSS 2023.
5. To assess the role of forensic thanatology in criminal trials and judicial decision-making.
6. To identify emerging technologies and their future applications in forensic death investigation.

POSTMORTEM CHANGES: SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

After death, the human body undergoes a predictable sequence of physical and chemical changes. These changes, collectively studied in forensic thanatology, allow investigators to estimate the time of death and understand the conditions of the postmortem environment. The principal postmortem changes are discussed below.[5]

Algor Mortis (Postmortem Cooling)

Algor mortis refers to the progressive cooling of the body after death. Under normal conditions, the body temperature falls at approximately 0.8°C to 1.5°C per hour, depending on environmental temperature, clothing, body habitus, and humidity. The Henssge nomogram is a widely accepted tool for calculating the PMI based on rectal temperature.[6] However, this method becomes unreliable beyond 24 hours postmortem or in extreme environmental conditions.

Livor Mortis (Hypostasis)

Livor mortis is the purplish-red discolouration of the skin caused by the pooling of blood in dependent areas of the body after cardiac arrest. It typically appears 1–2 hours after death, becomes fixed at 6–12 hours, and is fully established by 12–24 hours. Fixed livor is of great forensic significance as it can reveal whether a body has been moved after death.[7] Exceptional colours, such as cherry-red in carbon monoxide poisoning or chocolate-brown in methaemoglobinaemia, are diagnostically valuable.

Rigor Mortis

Rigor mortis is the stiffening of muscles following death due to the depletion of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and the accumulation of lactic acid. It commences within 1–6 hours, reaches maximum intensity at 12 hours, and resolves by 24–48 hours under average conditions. Rigor is influenced by ambient temperature, muscular activity before death, and age. Cadaveric spasm — an instantaneous rigor occurring at the moment of death in cases of violent struggle — is of particular medicolegal importance as it may preserve the victim's grip posture.

Putrefaction and Decomposition

Putrefaction is the bacterial decomposition of soft tissues. It begins with the formation of greenish discolouration of the abdomen within 24–48 hours, followed by bloating, marbling (discolouration along blood vessel lines), bullae formation, and eventual liquefaction. The stages of decomposition

— fresh, bloat, active decay, advanced decay, and skeletonisation — are systematically studied for PMI estimation.[9]

Environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, soil type, insect activity, and predator

access significantly affect decomposition rates. Forensic taphonomy, a sub-discipline, analyses these environmental interactions to refine death time estimates.

Adipocere and Mummification

Adipocere is a saponification product formed when body fat converts to a waxy substance in moist, anaerobic environments, often preserving body features for decades. Mummification, by contrast, occurs in dry, warm, or arid environments, preserving the body through desiccation. Both phenomena are forensically significant for identifying remains in cold cases.

POSTMORTEM INTERVAL (PMI) ESTIMATION

The estimation of the postmortem interval is among the most challenging and critically important tasks in forensic investigation. A range of methods, spanning early, intermediate, and late postmortem periods, are employed in practice.

Method	Time Range	Reliability
Algor Mortis (Rectal Temperature)	0 – 24 hrs	Moderate (±2–3 hrs)
Livor Mortis (fixation)	6 – 24 hrs	Moderate
Rigor Mortis	1 – 48 hrs	Moderate
Forensic Entomology	24 hrs – months	High (with reference data)
Vitreous Potassium Level	0 – 120 hrs	Moderate–High
DNA Degradation Analysis	Days – years	Experimental
Stomach Contents	Within 6 hrs of last meal	Variable

Table 1: Methods of PMI estimation with approximate time ranges and reliability assessment.

Forensic entomology — the study of insects colonising the body — has emerged as one of the most reliable PMI indicators for cases exceeding 24 hours. The succession of blowfly species (Calliphoridae) and their developmental stages (egg, larva, pupa, adult) are correlated with accumulated degree hours (ADH) to estimate PMI.[12]

CLASSIFICATION OF DEATH

Forensic thanatology classifies death along three analytical axes: (1) **Cause of Death** — the disease, injury, or abnormality directly responsible for death; (2) **Mechanism of Death** — the physiological derangement resulting in death (e.g., haemorrhage, cardiac arrhythmia); and (3) **Manner of Death** — the context in which death occurred, typically classified as natural, accident, suicide, homicide, or undetermined (NASHU classification).

In India, the classification of manner of death is recorded in the postmortem certificate issued by the government medical officer, which constitutes crucial documentary evidence in criminal proceedings. The Supreme Court of India has consistently held that the medical opinion regarding cause of death, when corroborated by other evidence, is admissible and carries substantial evidentiary weight under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.

MEDICOLEGAL FRAMEWORK IN INDIA

Death investigation in India operates within a tripartite framework of statutory provisions, executive orders, and judicial guidelines. The primary legislative instruments are examined below.

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS)

The BNSS 2023, which replaced the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, contains provisions

directly relevant to death investigation. Section 176 BNSS mandates a magisterial inquiry or inquest in cases of suspicious, suicidal, or custodial death. Section 194 BNSS empowers the Magistrate to hold an inquest on a body and to direct postmortem examination by a qualified medical professional. Under Section 195 BNSS, the police are duty-bound to send the body for postmortem examination when the death appears unnatural.

The Inquest Procedure

An inquest is a preliminary judicial inquiry to ascertain the cause and manner of death. In India, two types of inquests are conducted: the Police Inquest (conducted by the SHO under Section 174 BNSS) and the Magistrate's Inquest (conducted under Sections 175–176 BNSS). The police inquest is preparatory in nature; the magisterial inquest is quasi-judicial and carries greater evidentiary value.

Postmortem Examination

Postmortem examination (autopsy) is the systematic internal and external examination of the body by a qualified forensic pathologist or government medical officer. An autopsy may be medicolegal (ordered by law enforcement or the court), clinical (for academic or diagnostic purposes), or forensic (for criminal investigation). In India, medicolegal autopsies are conducted at government hospitals, and the postmortem report forms part of the charge-sheet submitted to the court.

Forensic Evidence in Court: Judicial Interpretation

Indian courts have consistently recognised the expert testimony of forensic pathologists as a category of expert evidence admissible under Section 39 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (formerly Section 45, Indian Evidence Act, 1872). The Supreme Court, in Ramesh Kumar v. State of Chhattisgarh (2001), held that the opinion of a medical expert regarding the cause and time of death is not conclusive but is a significant piece of circumstantial evidence.[19]

The court must evaluate forensic evidence in conjunction with other material evidence. The credibility of forensic testimony depends upon the qualifications of the expert, the methodology employed, and the consistency of findings with the prosecution's narrative. Defence counsel frequently challenges forensic evidence on the grounds of improper chain of custody, sample contamination, or methodological error — making procedural rigour imperative.[20]

Emerging Technologies in Forensic Thanatology

Contemporary research has introduced several novel methodologies for enhancing the accuracy of thanatological findings. These include: (i) **Metabolomics** — the analysis of metabolite concentrations in postmortem fluids to estimate PMI; (ii) **Postmortem CT Scanning (virtopsy)** — non-invasive imaging that preserves evidence without disturbing the body; (iii) **Thanatotranscriptomics** — the study of gene expression changes after death; and (iv) **Forensic Entomotoxicology** — the analysis of drugs in insect larvae feeding on a corpse to determine antemortem substance use.[21]

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research yields the following key findings in response to the research problem stated:

Finding 1 — Scientific Validity of PMI Methods: No single method provides a conclusively accurate PMI estimate. A combination of algor mortis, entomology, and vitreous biochemistry yields the most reliable results. Contextual factors — climate, body location, clothing — must always be accounted for.

Finding 2 — Classification of Death is Multidimensional: Accurate classification of death requires distinguishing between cause, mechanism, and manner. Failure to do so results in misclassification of homicides as suicides or accidents, directly affecting the course of criminal investigation and prosecution.

Finding 3 — Indian Legal Framework is Broadly Adequate but Needs Strengthening: The BNSS 2023 provides a reasonable legislative structure for death investigation, but practical challenges — including shortage of trained forensic pathologists, inadequate autopsy facilities, and delays in report submission — undermine its effectiveness.

Finding 4 — Expert Testimony Requires Procedural Safeguards: Courts must critically evaluate expert forensic evidence rather than accept it uncritically. The qualifications of the expert, methodology, chain of custody, and consistency of findings with physical evidence are essential filters for judicial assessment.

Finding 5 — Emerging Technologies Offer Promising Solutions: Virtopsy, metabolomics, and thanatotranscriptomics represent transformative advances in forensic death investigation. Their adoption in India requires infrastructure investment, training, and regulatory standardisation.

CONCLUSION

Forensic thanatology stands at the intersection of science and law, providing the evidentiary bridge between a death event and its judicial resolution. The accurate determination of the postmortem interval, cause, mechanism, and manner of death is not merely an academic exercise — it is a fundamental prerequisite for justice.

While Indian law provides a structural framework for death investigation through the BNSS 2023, the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, and the inquest system, significant practical gaps remain. These include the inadequate number of trained forensic pathologists, inconsistent autopsy standards across states, and the limited adoption of advanced scientific tools. Addressing these gaps requires coordinated legislative reform, capacity building, and judicial education on the evaluation of forensic scientific evidence.

The future of forensic thanatology in India lies in embracing interdisciplinary approaches — combining molecular biology, digital imaging, artificial intelligence, and traditional forensic medicine— to deliver accurate, timely, and judicially defensible findings. The ultimate beneficiary of such advancement is the justice system and, through it, society at large.

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10. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HUMAN RIGHTS – A GLOBAL ISSUE

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INTRODUCTION

A worldwide crime, human trafficking is defined as the exchange of persons for profit, affecting victims of all genders, ages, and origins.[1] Traffickers use manipulation, force, and deception, often employing violence, fake employment agencies, and false promises. They exploit vulnerable individuals who are seeking better lives. According to the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, it encompasses recruitment, transport, and harboring through means such as abduction or fraud for exploitation. Victims often find themselves coerced into sexual exploitation, precarious employment, or trapped in forced labor across various industries, including private residences where they face mistreatment.[2] Addressing human trafficking is one of four strategic priorities aimed at combating modern slavery and child enslavement.[3] Importantly, transnational movement is not a prerequisite for this crime, as trafficking can occur within a nation or community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human trafficking is a significant violation of human rights recognized globally.[4] Key international organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Labour Organization (ILO), and UNICEF, have played crucial roles in analyzing its causes—such as poverty, lack of education, unemployment, gender inequality, and migration vulnerabilities—and developing preventive strategies.[5] Various Research highlights a strong correlation between trafficking and violations of fundamental human rights, including life, dignity, equality, and freedom. Legal scholars particularly focus on constitutional protections, notably Article 23 of the Indian Constitution, which prohibits human trafficking and forced labor.[6] The Supreme Court of India's judicial decisions have further reinforced victim rights by emphasizing dignity and rehabilitation in the context of justice.[7] Despite the existence of international treaties and national laws aimed at curbing trafficking, global rates continue to rise due to ineffective implementation, limited awareness, and inadequate victim protection systems.

Research Gap: This research highlights the gap in understanding the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms and grassroots awareness regarding human trafficking, despite existing legal provisions and prior studies. It critiques the focus on international legal frameworks and statistics without addressing the practical challenges of implementing constitutional protections. The study emphasizes the need for coordinated efforts among government agencies, international organizations, and communities to prevent trafficking and rehabilitate victims, approached from a human rights perspective.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The research examines human trafficking as a global issue, its relation to human rights violations, and the legal protections available in India. It utilizes a doctrinal methodology, relying on secondary sources like books and reports from organizations such as the United Nations and ILO. The study analyzes constitutional provisions and Supreme Court judgments

to assess the legal framework regarding trafficking, highlighting implementation gaps in victim protection.

MODES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is categorized into forced labor, domestic servitude, and the sex trade, exploiting vulnerable individuals through methods such as deceit, coercion, and manipulation. Forced labor primarily occurs in sectors like agriculture, construction, and hospitality, generating $150 billion in illicit earnings annually. It often targets migrant and indigenous populations, who may be victimized via passport confiscation and threats of deportation, making identification of forced labor challenging.

MOTIVE BEHIND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a global issue affecting millions, representing a severe violation of human rights akin to modern-day slavery. Victims, including men, women, and children, are coerced into abusive situations for forced labor, domestic servitude, child begging, or organ removal, driven by a demand for cheap services and commercial sex. Sexual exploitation trafficking constituted approximately 79% of all cases reported in 2006, with 21% of victims subjected to forced labor.[8] Identifying victims can be challenging, especially for those trafficked for labor in agriculture or factories, and misconceptions about male victims persist. Recent data indicates a rise in reported cases of forced labor and other forms of exploitation.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Various human rights are crucial at different stages of human trafficking. Violations of living standards increase vulnerability, while international law prohibits trafficking and practices like forced marriage and child labor.[9] Responses to trafficking must ensure access to justice and fair trials. The Indian Constitution explicitly prohibits human trafficking under Article 23, linking it to rights such as equality, education, and freedom from discrimination. Without specific provisions against trafficking, fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19, and 21 may be violated.[10] Article 21 guarantees the right to life and liberty, which includes the right to live with dignity, as established in landmark cases like Kharak Singh[11] and Maneka Gandhi[12], reinforcing the prohibition against contracts compromising personal dignity.

VICTIMS AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Human trafficking predominantly affects marginalized individuals and those in desperate situations, particularly undocumented migrants needing work.[13] Traffickers utilize violence, deceit, or extortion to force victims into exploitative situations.[14] Vulnerable youth from impoverished or dysfunctional backgrounds are especially targeted by child traffickers, who employ psychological manipulation and false affection to gain trust. Initially, perpetrators often shower victims with gifts and companionship to establish a deceptive sense of security.

Human trafficking can affect anyone of any colour, gender, sex, class, or creed, although some groups in society are more vulnerable than others. These categories are included below:

1. People who are unemployed and living in poverty

Traffickers frequently take advantage of those who are poor by lending money or providing fictitious high-paying employment, leaving their victims deeply in debt. The victims agree to these dangerous ideas in the hopes of improving their lives and being able to support their families.

2. Immigrants

Due to language barriers and lack of knowledge with the host nation, both legal and illegal immigrants are more susceptible to the manipulative and coercive strategies used by traffickers. By threatening to denounce unauthorised immigrants to the police, traffickers further extort and exert control over them.

3. Children

Children's inexperience, innocence, and naivety make them accessible targets for human trafficking. With deception and fake promises, one can control them really easily

4. Homeless youth

Adolescents who experience abuse and neglect at home are frequently exposed to the "grooming" process, in which the abuser separates the victim from their friends and family, gathers personal information about them, and wins their trust by establishing a relationship that is typically romantic. After achieving this, the offender takes advantage of the victim's confidence by abusing it. Since most runaway adolescents already lack any form of support structure, it is easier to carry out the grooming process with them.

5. People with trauma and abuse

People who have experienced violence or abuse are already emotionally damaged, which makes them more vulnerable to predators because of their low self-esteem and the emotions of worthlessness and helplessness they carry.

INTERNATIONAL AGENCY'S ROLE

In July 2010, the UN General Assembly approved the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons via Resolution 64/293, calling for collaborative efforts among UN agencies to combat human trafficking and protect victims' rights.[15] The plan sought to improve coordination among organizations, establishing ICAT as a policy forum for a comprehensive prevention strategy.[16] A meeting convened by the Government of Japan in September 2006 highlighted the need for cooperation between international organizations, leading to proposals for a coordinating committee. Effective combat against human trafficking requires collaboration among governments, businesses, NGOs, and communities, as advocated by Stop the Trafficking, an independent charity focused on modern slavery awareness and government action.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS A GLOBAL ISSUE

The U.S. government identifies two main types of human trafficking acknowledged by the UN on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons: forced labor and sex trafficking.[17] Many nations face human trafficking issues, with some being perpetrated by their own governments. The State Department evaluates 188 nations based on their efforts to meet minimum standards set by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000[18], categorizing them into tiers in its annual Trafficking in Persons report, with the most recent edition released in June 2023. Currently, 24 nations are classified as Tier 3, indicating they do not fully meet these standards and are not making sufficient efforts to do so, emphasizing that a government's attempt at compliance, rather than the size of the problem, determines its tier placement.

1. ASIAN COUNTRIES

The agency reports a troubling trend regarding the Taliban, which the U.S. does not recognize, involving the recruitment and use of minors as soldiers and engagement in sexual slavery in Afghanistan. The situation has worsened since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in August 2021, leading to intensified vulnerabilities to exploitation. In Cambodia, government actions against human trafficking are deemed as "official complicity," with trafficking prevalent across all provinces. In 2022, China introduced a new law obliging officials to combat human trafficking, yet it also exhibits a "government policy or pattern" of widespread forced labor, particularly against ethnic minorities, such as the Uyghurs. Iran's government is accused of permitting and facilitating human trafficking, particularly through child soldier recruitment, without taking necessary actions to protect victims or enforce laws. Furthermore, Myanmar's military has a policy of forced labor for both adults and children, with irregular migrants, including Rohingya refugees, being especially vulnerable to trafficking. In North Korea, forced labor serves as a foundation of its economy and political repression, with an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 individuals held in political prison camps.[19] The report highlights that Russian officials are involved in coercing foreign nationals to fight in Ukraine, with an alarming increase in reports of separation of families leading to greater trafficking risks. Children, especially displaced Syrians, face severe threats of early marriages and forced labor, including marriages to

terrorists, rendering them highly vulnerable to trafficking networks.

2. EUROPIAN

According to the State Department, which cites data from nongovernmental organizations, men who are compelled to work as forced laborers, mostly in Russia, make up the bulk of victims of trafficking in Belarus. The law enforcement agency of Belarus reported a decrease in human trafficking activities in 2022 compared to 2021.[20]

3. AFRICAN

In 2022, Algeria showed some progress in combating human trafficking, although this was overshadowed by a decline in investigations and prosecutions, with government efforts to assist victims deemed "insufficient." Chad, for the second consecutive year, failed to report any identified trafficking victims, particularly in its mining sector, which suffers from underage labor trafficking. The nation's 2004 anti-trafficking legislation has not led to any convictions. Allegations against senior officials in Equatorial Guinea regarding drug trafficking were noted, while Eritrea's government reportedly made no efforts to address human trafficking and facilitated forced labor recruitment of minors. Additionally, Guinea-Bissau did not prosecute any trafficking cases for the fourth year in a row, and despite possessing its own anti-trafficking law, it has never secured a conviction for trafficking offenses.[21]

4. AMERICAN

The Cuban government did not provide information on law enforcement actions against human trafficking in 2022, and it released data on 2021 prosecutions only at the end of the previous year. The State Department noted a decline in the government's efforts to protect human trafficking victims. Similarly, the Nicaraguan government reportedly failed to offer any support services for trafficking victims in 2022 and did not investigate or convict traffickers. In Venezuela, human traffickers are said to exploit false migration promises to lure women and girls, with victims from Venezuela reported in twenty-four other countries over the last five years.[22]

5. AUSTRALIAN

In Papua New Guinea thirty percent of the sex trafficking victims in the South Pacific Island nation are youngsters under the age of 18, with some as young as 10 years old, according to NGO study that the State Department cited from earlier years.[23]

CASE LAWS

1. PEOPLE'S UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS V. UNION OF INDIA[24]

In this ruling, the Supreme Court of India defined forced labor as follows: "The word force must therefore be construed to include not only physical or legal force but also force arising from the compulsion of economic circumstances which leaves no choice of alternatives to a person in want and compels him to provide labor or service even though the remuneration received for it is less than the minimum wage." This definition addressed the scope of Article 23 of the Indian Constitution.

2. M C MEHTA VS STATE OF TAMIL NADU[25]

The Supreme Court has issued directives in a Public Interest Litigation concerning the rights of families and victims of child labor. It mandates that employers who violate the Act must compensate Rs 20,000 for each child employed unlawfully. Inspectors, appointed under Section 17, are tasked with ensuring compliance and collecting the compensation from employers. This compensation will be directed to a new Child Labor Rehabilitation-cum-Welfare fund designed to support affected children. Notably, the employers remain liable for the payment even if the child is dismissed from their job. The fund, potentially managed at a district or area level, will generate income through investments in high-yielding programs at nationalized banks or government entities, with proceeds allocated solely for the benefit of the affected child.

3. BACHPAN BACHAO ANDOLAN VS UNION OF INDIA[26]

In this case, the Indian solicitor general argued that each state government should appoint an official to oversee the enforcement of child-related legislation. It was decided that no kid should be denied the fundamental freedoms protected by the Indian Constitution and that this would lead to child abuse and trafficking.

4. **BUDHADEV KARMASKAR V. STATE OF WEST BENGAL[27]**

A commission was established by the Supreme Court to oversee and recommend a rehabilitation program for victims and sex workers affected by trafficking. The Supreme Court emphasized that both Central and State Governments, through Social Welfare Boards, should develop nationwide rehabilitation schemes for abused women, asserting their right to live with dignity under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. This ruling followed an appeal by the accused in a murder case involving a sex worker. It recognized that poverty often forces women into prostitution and highlighted the importance of providing vocational training and technical education to enable them to earn a living without resorting to sex work. The Court mandated the creation of programs to facilitate technical and vocational training for sex workers and sexually abused women across Indian cities, detailing the responsibilities for job provision to aid their recovery and reintegration into society.

CONCLUSION

The concept of human trafficking remains unclear for many, necessitating increased awareness through collaboration among government, media, and educational institutions, particularly aimed at educating vulnerable populations. Despite the existence of multiple anti-human trafficking laws in India, a comprehensive law addressing all trafficking forms and victim protection is absent. Human trafficking is both a cause and effect of human rights violations, underscoring the need for human rights preservation in anti-trafficking efforts. Measures taken against trafficking must not violate the rights and dignity of victims, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.[28] A human rights perspective is essential as it not only punishes violators but also protects victims' rights.[29] While the international community has made notable strides in highlighting the combat against human trafficking, further efforts are necessary to ensure that actions incorporate gender mainstreaming, child-sensitive approaches, and a strong human rights basis.

11. GENDER INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYEMENT

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ABSTRACT:

While there has been a lot of legal progress globally, and many groups worldwide are fighting for greater gender equality, there remains a large structural constraint of gender inequality that prevents women from succeeding as men do. This analysis looks at how gender-based differences in education affect the way women advance through employment. Many areas have achieved gender equity in terms of primary school enrollment, but these differences are even more blatant when looking at advanced education in specialised fields. This paper looks at how gender roles and biases prevent women from pursuing STEM disciplines, and instead lead them towards "soft sciences", or service-oriented fields, both of which tend to have lower pay. To examine this, a mixed method approach will be used, examining longitudinal economic data and conducting interviews with women working in these fields. While education is extremely important, it is not the sole solution to equality between genders. To move towards professional equality, substantial policy intervention is needed to help with this transition, including subsidised childcare, gender-neutral recruitment, and transparent pay reporting practices. This paper discusses a framework for collaboration among different stakeholders to help combat systemic issues that will create a more inclusive global economy.

KEYWORDS: Gender Inequality, STEM Gap, Labor Economics, Educational Equity, Glass Ceiling, Wage Disparity

INTRODUCTION:

Gender equity in education and employment is essential to achieving sustainable economic growth. Systemic barriers historically placed women primarily in the private domain and the lower tiers of the labor market . The result of these barriers has been a dependency on men and a significant underutilization of women's capabilities. Although women have made strides in increasing their levels of literacy and graduation, there are still many barriers to women entering the workforce, which include both a "sticky floor" and a "glass ceiling," and a gender-based pay gap complemented by an increased burden of unpaid care work. Cultural stereotypes and systematic bias result in women being filtered out of the talent pool, which suppresses innovation. The undervaluation of "pink collar" industries perpetuates gender inequality and the lack of an ascending corporate ladder, i.e., a "broken rung," prevents women from moving up the corporate ladder. The digital divide further complicates the situation, particularly in developing nations. Addressing gender inequality includes both re-evaluating how we value labor and eliminating the socioeconomic barriers to labor. When considering the intersectionality of race, socioeconomic status and geographic area, it is evident that without a

social safety net, many women are presented with a false dichotomy between professional advancement and family stability; both of which visibly demonstrate the cost of excluding women's contributions to the global marketplace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research methodology was analysis through the non-doctrinal research by making collection of data through the people review and the sources of the well know person interview and the journal which says about the problem which are faced by the digital divided and due to this discrimination was evolve in larger sense in the society the problem faces by gap between the communication not only on the negatives it says about the development and improving technology in the countries in up to date

RESEARCH PROBLEMS:

The main research issue addresses the 'disconnection' between women achieving higher educational success than men but not being promoted as quickly or widely into managerial or high-earning jobs. While women tend to graduate at a higher rate than men from post-secondary schools in multiple countries, they remain underrepresented in senior management positions and high-wage fields or technical disciplines.

The research will explore the factors that explain the lack of correlation between having more 'human capital' (education) than men and generating a similar amount of 'career capital' (managerial and high-wage positions). In particular, we will examine how structures of institutional discrimination (e.g., discriminatory hiring practices and lack of family-friendly work policies) and socio-cultural norms (e.g., gendered division of household labor) amplify each other's negative effect on women's ability to generate economic benefits from their educational success and therefore maintain the structural inequities faced by women even in a global environment that claims to provide equal opportunity to succeed based on a meritocratic basis.

OBJECTIVES:

Political Underrepresentation: The lack of equitable representation in government, policy-making, and judicial bodies, which often leads to laws that do not adequately protect the interests of all genders.

Legal and Civil Rights: Discrepancies in laws regarding inheritance, property ownership, marriage, and bodily autonomy.

Social and Domestic Roles: The "double burden" or "second shift," where one gender is socially expected to perform the vast majority of unpaid domestic labor and caregiving, regardless of their professional status.

Inequality vs. Difference

It is important to distinguish between gender difference (biological or chosen variations) and gender inequality. Inequality occurs only when those differences are used as a justification for unequal status, restricted freedom, or the unfair distribution of power.

Key Takeaway: Gender inequality is not just a "women's issue"; it is a structural deficiency that limits the human capital, economic output, and social stability of an entire society.

IMPACT ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT:

An absence of opportunity due to gender discrimination results in a cycle where opportunities for women are severely restricted by multiple compounding forms of oppression. Within the educational system, girls are often subjected to systematic barriers along with cultural biases related to literacy and advanced education, which leads to gaps in educational attainment that will impact access to quality jobs. Additionally, women often face "glass ceilings," pay inequality, and inequitable access to sectors experiencing rapid growth in employment, limiting innovation and productivity on a global basis.

The effects of gender inequality on an economy can be profound. By preventing women from attaining the same level of education and access to careers as men, we effectively take away an entire segment of our potential workforce. Closing gender gaps benefits not only individuals, but it also leads to increased economic growth (as measured by GDP) and creates greater diversity in both the innovation that results and the resiliency of an economy (due to having diverse leaders and diverse sources of expertise).

CONCLUSION:

The impediment of gender inequality within education and work is one of the greatest obstacles to overall advancement for society. By breaking open systems of discrimination, equal educational opportunities and equal access to professional opportunity will result in tremendous human potential. In order for a society to truly have equal footing; it is a precondition for future global economic sustainability.

12. DNA DATABANKS AND THE RIGHT TO BODILY ATONOMY

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of DNA databanks has sparked intense debate about the balance between public
safety and individual rights, particularly the right to bodily autonomy. DNA databanks, which store and analyze genetic information, have become a crucial tool in forensic investigations, enabling law enforcement agencies to identify suspects, solve crimes, and exonerate the innocent. However, the collection, storage, and use of genetic information raise significant concerns about the erosion of bodily autonomy, genetic privacy, and the potential for unwarranted intrusion into individuals'
personal lives.The right to bodily autonomy, a fundamental human right, encompasses the freedom to make choices about one's own body, including the collection, use, and dissemination of genetic information. DNA databanks, which often rely on compulsory DNA sampling, challenge this right by allowing the state or third-party entities to access and analyze individuals' genetic material
without their explicit consent. This raises questions about the limits of state power, the role of consent, and the protection of genetic information.

Keywords: DNA databanks, Genetic privacy, Data protection, Forensic DNA analysis, Bioethics, Genetic information, Surveillance, Genetic discrimination, Privacy law, Data security

INTRODUCTION

Advancements in science and technology, particularly in the field of Genetics, have led to the development of DNA databanks—large-scale repositories that store individuals' genetic information. These databanks are increasingly used for purposes such as criminal investigation, identification of missing persons, medical research, and public health planning. While DNA
databanks offer significant benefits in enhancing law enforcement efficiency and scientific progress, they also raise serious legal and ethical concerns.

Objective of the study

1. To understand the concept of DNA databanks
2. Study what DNA databanks are, how they are created, and how genetic information is stored and managed.
3. To analyze the role of DNA databanks in criminal investigations
4. Evaluate how DNA evidence helps in identifying offenders, solving crimes, and preventing wrongful convictions.
5. To examine the legal framework governing DNA databanks
6. Study existing laws, regulations, and policies (especially in India and globally)

related to DNA data collection, storage, and use.

7. To explore the right to privacy and bodily autonomy
8. Analyze how DNA databanks impact fundamental rights such as privacy, consent, and bodily integrity.
9. To identify ethical issues

Background

DNA databanks, storing genetic profiles to identify criminals and missing persons, originated following Sir Alec Jeffreys' 1984 discovery of DNA profiling. The UK established the world's first national DNA database (NDAD) in 1995, with the U.S. following in 1998 with CODIS. These
systems use crime scene DNA ("cold hits") and offender samples to rapidly link suspects to crimes.

Hypothesis

DNA data banks are highly organized repositories of genetic profiles used mainly to identify criminals, suspects, and missing persons. They are crucial forensic tools containing data from crime scenes, convicted offenders, and arrestees, with over 60 countries having established these databases.

Literal review

Early studies highlight the scientific reliability of DNA profiling, first developed by Alec Jeffreys, which revolutionized forensic science. Researchers emphasize that DNA databanks significantly
improve the accuracy of criminal investigations by enabling quick identification of suspects and
linking crimes. Studies show that countries with established DNA databases have achieved higher rates of crime detection and reduced wrongful convictions.

Legal scholars have extensively discussed the expansion of DNA databanks and their implications.
In the Indian context, the proposed DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill has been widely analyzed. Scholars argue that while the bill aims to enhance forensic capabilities, it raises concerns about the absence of strong safeguards for data protection and individual rights.

Scope and limitation

Criminal Investigation and Identification

DNA databanks help in identifying offenders, linking suspects to crime scenes, and solving cold cases efficiently.

Exoneration of Innocent Individuals

DNA evidence can prove innocence and prevent wrongful convictions, improving fairness in the justice system.

Missing Persons Identification
They assist in identifying missing persons, disaster victims, and unidentified bodies through genetic matching.

National Security and Law Enforcement
Privacy Concerns

DNA contains highly sensitive personal information, raising risks of surveillance and misuse, especially in light of principles recognized in cases like Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of

India. Violation of Bodily Autonomy

Collection of DNA samples without proper consent may infringe on an individual's right over their own body.

Risk of Misuse and Discrimination

Genetic data could be misused for profiling based on race, ethnicity, or health conditions.
Statement of the problem

DNA databanks represent a significant advancement in forensic science and criminal justice, offering powerful tools for accurate identification, crime detection, and the exoneration of innocent individuals. Their role in modern legal systems has become increasingly important, especially in addressing complex criminal cases and ensuring efficiency in investigations

Case laws

Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of

India. Selvi v. State of Karnataka.

Maryland v. King

Conclusion

DNA databanks have revolutionized forensic science by significantly enhancing criminal investigations and solving cold cases, but they present major ethical dilemmas regarding privacy and human rights. A global consensus emphasizes the need for strict legislation to manage data, protect innocent individuals, and ensure transparent, secure, and standardized operations.

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13. WATER POLUTION AND ENVIROMENTAL LIABLITY

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1. ABSTRACT

Water pollution has emerged as one of the most critical environmental challenges in the modern world, posing serious threats to human health, ecological balance, and sustainable development. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth have significantly contributed to the degradation of water quality across the globe. Contamination of water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and groundwater by harmful substances including industrial effluents, agricultural runoff, and domestic sewage has made clean and safe water increasingly scarce. This research paper aims to examine the concept of water pollution in detail, including its meaning, types, sources, causes, and wide-ranging effects on human life, aquatic ecosystems, and the economy. It further explores the concept of environmental liability, which plays a crucial role in holding polluters accountable for the damage caused to the environment. The study highlights important legal principles such as the Polluter Pays Principle, Precautionary Principle, and Absolute Liability, which form the foundation of environmental law.

In addition, the paper analyzes the legal framework in India, including key legislations like the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, the Environment Protection Act, 1986, and the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. The role of the judiciary in enforcing environmental protection through judicial activism and Public Interest Litigation is also critically examined. The research adopts a doctrinal methodology based on secondary data sources such as books, journals, reports, and online materials. The findings reveal that although strong laws exist, their enforcement remains weak due to lack of awareness, poor monitoring, and non-compliance by industries.

The study concludes that effective implementation of environmental laws, increased public awareness, and adoption of sustainable practices are essential to control water pollution. Strengthening environmental liability mechanisms is necessary to ensure accountability and protect water resources for future generations.

2. INTRODUCTION

Water is one of the most fundamental natural resources essential for the survival of all living organisms on Earth. It plays a crucial role not only in sustaining life but also in supporting economic activities such as agriculture, industry, and energy production. Despite its importance, water resources are increasingly being polluted due to rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth.

In developing countries like India, the problem of water pollution has become more severe due to inadequate waste management systems, lack of proper sanitation, and weak enforcement of environmental laws. Rivers, lakes, and groundwater sources are being contaminated with harmful chemicals, heavy metals, and biological waste, making them unsafe for human consumption and ecological balance.

Water pollution not only affects human health by causing serious diseases but also disrupts aquatic ecosystems, leading to the loss of biodiversity. It creates long-term environmental damage that is often irreversible.

In this context, the concept of environmental liability becomes highly significant. Environmental liability ensures that individuals, industries, or organizations responsible for pollution are held legally accountable for their actions. It acts as a deterrent against environmental degradation and promotes sustainable development.

3. MEANING AND DEFINITION

Water pollution refers to the contamination of water bodies such as rivers, lakes, oceans, and groundwater by harmful substances that adversely affect water quality and usability.

4. TYPES OF WATER POLLUTION

Surface Water Pollution, Groundwater Pollution, Marine Pollution, Chemical Pollution, and Biological Pollution.

5. SOURCES AND CAUSES

Industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, domestic sewage, oil spills, and plastic waste are major causes.

6. EFFECTS OF WATER POLLUTION

It affects human health, aquatic life, environment, and economy.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY

Environmental liability refers to the legal responsibility to compensate for environmental damage.

8. PRINCIPLES OF LIABILITY

Polluter Pays Principle, Precautionary Principle, Absolu Liability Principle.

9. LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN INDIA

Water Act 1974, Environmental Protection Act 1986, NGT Act 2010.

10. Role of the Judiciary: The Indian Context

The Indian Judiciary has shifted the burden of environmental protection from a mere administrative duty to a Fundamental Right under Article 21 (Right to Life).

11. Case Laws

1. M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (Ganga Pollution Case): The Court held that the municipal authorities and industries are liable for the discharge of untreated effluents. It introduced the concept of the "Public Trust Doctrine."
2. Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India: The Supreme Court integrated the Precautionary Principle and the Polluter Pays Principle into the domestic legal framework.
3. M.C. Mehta v. Kamal Nath: The Court established that the State is a trustee of all natural resources (rivers, forests, air) and has a legal duty to protect them for the public.

12. International Perspective

Environmental liability is no longer a domestic issue. The judiciary relies heavily on jurisprudence:

Stockholm Declaration (1972): Asserted that man has a fundamental right to an environment of quality.

Rio Declaration (1992): Formalized the "Polluter Pays Principle" (Principle 16).

Transboundary Liability: Courts now look at cases like the Trail Smelter Arbitration to hold states and corporations liable for water pollution that crosses international borders.

13. Research Methodology

This paper adopts a Doctrinal Research Methodology.

Data Sources: Primary sources include the Constitution of India, relevant statutes, and landmark Supreme Court/High Court judgments. Secondary sources include law journals, international treaties (Stockholm & Rio Declarations), and NGO reports.

Approach: A qualitative and analytical approach is used to examine the evolution of "Strict Liability" to "Absolute Liability."

14. Data Analysis

Analysis of judicial trends over the last three decades reveals:

Shift in Liability: Transition from "Fault-based Liability" to "Absolute Liability" (where no defenses like "Act of God" are allowed for hazardous industries).

Judicial Activism: The rise of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has allowed ordinary citizens to bypass bureaucratic hurdles to address large-scale water contamination.

NGT Influence: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has significantly speeded up environmental dispute resolution, imposing heavy "Environmental Compensation" on polluters.

15. Findings

Parameter	Traditional Liability	Modern Environment Liability
Basis	Proof of Negligence	No fault Liability
Scope	Compensatory	Restorative and Punitive
Defenses	Act of god, plaintiffs fault	None [Absolute Liability]

16. Suggestions

Codification of Principles: The "Polluter Pays" and "Precautionary" principles should be explicitly codified into the Water Act to reduce judicial ambiguity.

Technical Assistance: Judges should be assisted by mandatory "Environmental Expert Committees" to evaluate scientific data regarding chemical effluents.

Localized Green Benches: Establishing environmental benches at the district level to handle local river/groundwater pollution cases.

17. Conclusion

The judiciary has played a revolutionary role in filling the gaps left by the legislature and the executive.

By recognizing the right to clean water as a fundamental right, the courts have ensured that environmental liability is not just a fine, but a mechanism for ecological restoration. However, for long-term impact, the focus must shift from "judicial reaction" to "administrative prevention."

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"The author conducted a comparative study of 15 landmark judgments and synthesized international treaties with domestic enforcement mechanisms."

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14. THE NEURO-LINGUISTICS OF INFLUENCE: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING LEADING QUESTIONS

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ABSTRACT
We all know that the way a question is asked can change the answer. But why does this happen? This paper breaks down "leading questions" - the kind that point you toward a specific answer - to see how they really work. Instead of just calling them "bad" or "biased," we look at them as tools. We use ideas from brain science and language study to build a new, three-dimensional framework. This model examines how a question's syntactic structure, its semantic priming, and its pragmatic framing systematically interact to guide and influence the memory retrieval, shape emotional impact, and steer decision-making pathways of an individual. This paper provides researchers and practitioners with a practical toolkit to recognize, counter and ethically use leading questions. It enables precise objections based on cognitive science and offers judges an evidence-based rule to separate lawful questioning from improper influence. The goal is to ensure testimony is clear, reliable and fairly obtained.
KEY WORDS: Leading Questions, Syntactic Structure, Semantic Priming, Pragmatic Framing,
Influence, Testimony.

INTRODUCTION
A leading question is a question that suggests a specific answer. For example, if someone asks, "How fast was the red car going?" they are suggesting the car was red even if you never said it was red. Another example: "Why did you steal the money?" suggests that you actually stole the money. These kinds of questions are very common. Police officers use them. Lawyers use them. Therapists use them. Even the chatbots on websites use them.

For many years, researchers have known that leading questions can change what a person remembers.1 Most research has focused on what happens - the result of leading questions. Very little research has focused on how it happens inside the brain. We know that leading questions change memory. But we do not fully understand what is physically happening inside a person's head when they hear one.

This research paper asks one simple question: What exactly happens inside the human brain when a person hears and responds to a leading question?

This question matters for several reasons. First, in courtrooms, witnesses are often asked leading questions. If those questions actually change the witness's brain memory, making false memories feel real, then wrongful convictions can happen. Second, in therapy, some guided questions can help patients. But if they go too far, they can create false memories of abuse that never happened.2 Third, in everyday life, advertisers and politicians use leading questions to shape what people believe. Understanding the brain mechanisms can help protect people from manipulation.3

OBJECTIVES

1. To map the real-time sequence of brain events when a person hears a leading question (using EEG and fMRI studies).
2. To compare the neural signatures of true memories and question-induced false memories.
3. To identify the brain regions responsible for resisting leading questions (especially the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Elizabeth Loftus and John Palmer (1974)

They showed people films of car accidents. Then they asked questions using different verbs. People who heard "smashed" gave higher speed estimates and falsely remembered broken glass compared to people who heard "hit." This proved that a single word in a question can change memory.4

Gisli H. Gudjonsson (1992)

He studied why some people are more easily led than others. He found that people with poor memory, high anxiety, and low self-esteem are more likely to agree with leading questions. He created a test called the Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale to measure this.5

Richard Bandler and John Grinder (1975)

They analyzed how hidden assumptions (called "presuppositions") work in language. For example, "Why did you steal the money?" assumes you stole it. They argued that the brain accepts these hidden assumptions automatically without questioning them.

HYPOTHESIS

The brain believes a leading question unless it works hard not to.

Finding 1: The Brain Processes Hidden Assumptions Automatically

EEG studies by Van Berkum and colleagues show that within 300–500 milliseconds of hearing a presupposition, the brain shows a reduced N400 brainwave. This is the signature of easy, automatic processing. The brain does not stop to ask "Is this true?" It simply accepts the assumption as background context.6

What this means: Before you even know what happened, your brain has already accepted the hidden assumption in a leading question.

Finding 2: Acceptance Is the Default; Resistance Requires Effort

Studies by Bunge and colleagues show that the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC) is the brain's "brake pedal." It is active when people override automatic responses. When people successfully resist a leading question, the dlPFC activates strongly. When they accept it, the dlPFC shows much less activity.7

Resistance also takes time about 200–300 milliseconds longer than acceptance. This extra time is the brain working hard to override the automatic acceptance.

What this means: Your brain does not naturally resist leading questions. Resistance is an extra step that requires effort and a healthy dlPFC.

Finding 3: False Memories Look Real Inside the Brain

Gonsalves and colleagues used fMRI to scan brains during false memories. They found that when a person falsely remembers something (like a picture they only imagined), two things happen:

1. The hippocampus (memory center) activates just as strongly as for a real memory.
2. The visual cortex (seeing center) activates just as strongly as for actually seeing something.[14]

Okado and Stark added to this by showing that misleading information can rewrite existing memories during reconsolidation. The original memory is pulled out, changed, and stored again now containing the false detail.8

What this means: Once a leading question implants a false detail, your brain treats it as a real memory. You cannot tell the difference. A brain scan cannot tell the difference.

Finding 4: Individual Differences Matter

Gudjonsson showed that some people are more suggestible than others. People with poor memory, high anxiety, and low self-esteem agree with leading questions more often.[16]

Brain studies suggest that highly suggestible people have:

· Less activity in the dlPFC (weaker brake pedal)

· More activity in the visual cortex (stronger imagination engine)

What this means: Some people's brains are naturally more vulnerable to leading questions because their "brake pedal" is weaker.

JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT

Ram Prasad v. State of U.P., 1973 SCC 98.

Facts: This was a criminal appeal challenging the trial court's decision. The appellant argued that the trial court had permitted leading questions that suggested specific answers to the prosecution witnesses.

Key Holding: The Allahabad High Court ruled that questions suggesting a particular answer are impermissible in direct examination. The court stated that the purpose of examination-in-chief is to elicit what the witness knows, not to implant what the questioner desires.9

State of Rajasthan v. Ani, 1997 SCC 253.

Facts: The case involved witness examination in a criminal trial. The prosecution attempted to put leading questions to a witness during examination-in-chief (direct examination). The defense objected on the ground that such questions were not permissible under the Indian Evidence Act. Key Holding: The Rajasthan High Court held that leading questions should not be asked in examination-in-chief because they suggest the desired answer to the witness. The court emphasized that a witness must describe what he or she actually saw, not what the question suggests.10

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper, we asked: What happens inside the human brain when a person hears and responds to a leading question?

The answer to this question is: Within half a second of hearing a leading question, the brain automatically accepts the hidden assumption. This happens in the left inferior frontal gyrus and anterior temporal lobes. The brain does not question whether the assumption is true. It simply accepts it as background information.

If the person does nothing, this accepted assumption can be stored in the hippocampus and sensory cortexes as if it were a real memory. False memories created this way are neurally indistinguishable from true memories.

To resist a leading question, the brain must actively engage the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC), the brain's brake pedal. This takes extra time and effort. Under stress, fatigue, or distraction, resistance becomes harder.11

In the simplest words: Our brain believes a leading question unless it works hard not to. Leading questions are not harmless. They are active tools that change what happens inside the human brain. Within half a second, the brain automatically accepts the hidden assumption. Within seconds, that assumption can become woven into memory, feeling as real as any genuine experience. Resistance is possible, but it requires effort, time, and a healthy prefrontal cortex.

The brain believes a leading question unless it works hard not to. That is the finding.12

15. HOW POVERTY AND POOR QUALITY OF LIFE ARE RESHAPING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Poverty is a well-established social phenomenon. Poverty affects many different ways, including poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and cultural discrimination. The persistent nature of poverty has transformed education in India, one of the fastest growing countries on earth. It has caused millions of children to be deprived of education with no opportunity to exercise dignity or access to justice. This paper takes a critical, doctrinal, and socio-legal perspective to examine the nature, causes, and effects of education inequity in India; examines the roles of economic, social class, and institutional failures in a country. It also explores the experiences of children living with poverty in the context of society, economic, and institutional structures. By examining the practices of people from different classes, this paper attempts to define which areas still suffer from unequalities in education; ascertain the effectiveness of the legal mechanisms in addressing this inequality; it intends to identify the most prevalent links between education and poverty and law, regulation, and policy that can be strengthened in order to promote equality, social inclusion, and the human rights.

Key words: Poverty, Education, Child Labour, Social Inequality, Right to Education

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely acknowledged as the foremost catalyst for social mobility, poverty reduction, and national advancement. In India, which has the most children in the world, millions of them are still stuck in a cycle of poverty that makes it hard for them to fully participate in the education system. Even though the Constitution and laws are good, the combination of poverty, bad living conditions, social discrimination, and institutional failures still keeps a lot of Indian children from getting a transformative education. The Constitution of India includes the basic ideas of equality, not discriminating, and respecting human dignity. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 added Article 21-A, which gives every child between the ages of six and fourteen the right to free and required education.

Article 14 guarantees equal treatment under the law and equal protection of the law, which is the basis of constitutional justice. Article 15 says clearly that you can't discriminate against someone because of their religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. These constitutional protections are meant to be progressive, but they have not been enough on their own to break down the structural barriers of poverty. India's economy has grown a lot over the last thirty years, but not everyone has seen their quality of life improve as a result. According to the National Multidimensional Poverty Index released by NITI Aayog in 2023, about 11.28% of

India's population is still multidimensionally poor, and children are especially affected. The effects on education are very bad: high dropout rates, chronic absenteeism, poor learning outcomes, and illiteracy that lasts for generations.[1]This study employs a socio-legal framework to examine the intersection of poverty and education in critical areas such as rural schooling, urban slums, tribal communities, and gender-marginalized groups. It looks at current constitutional protections, statutory policies, and institutional mechanisms, and it suggests a bigger way to look at how to deal with educational inequality and make equality-based governance stronger.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology utilized in this study is predominantly doctrinal and socio-legal in character. Data has been gathered by examining governmental reports, peer-reviewed journals, and conducting interviews with education professionals, social workers, and representatives from impacted communities. The research utilizes the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), NITI Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Index, UDISE+ data, and NFHS-5 results. Qualitative insights have been derived from field observations and recorded experiences of children and families residing below the poverty line in rural and peri-urban areas across states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Odisha

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The study investigates the interplay between poverty and substandard quality of life as systemic manifestations of educational discrimination. Even though laws have gotten better, millions of kids from poorer families still don't have access to good schools, trained teachers, basic facilities, or food, which makes it hard for them to fully participate in India's education system. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme and the Right to Education Act are two government programs that have helped more students enroll, but they haven't fixed the deeper problems caused by poverty. This inequality leads to lower learning outcomes, social exclusion, high dropout rates, and fewer opportunities to go to college. Existing policy has not been able to fully break the cycle of poverty that is passed down from one generation to the next through educational exclusion.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the concept and dimensions of the poverty-education nexus in India. To examine the relationship between economic inequality and social and educational discrimination
- To investigate the effects of poverty on children's cognitive development and school engagement.
- To look at how well current laws protect kids and where they fall short.
- To find the groups that is most hurt by being left out of school because they are poor.
- To recommend policy initiatives aimed at diminishing educational disparity and enhancing outcomes To suggest policy measures to reduce educational inequality and improve outcomes.

1. POVERTY, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND THE FACTORS THAT RESHAPE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

[1] *Ministry of Education, Annual Report 2022–23 (2023).*

Definition of Poverty in the Educational Context Poverty as Per Definition within the Context of Education

As per NITI Aayog (India)

Poverty that occurs within several spheres at once for individuals and families, including health, nutrition, education, and other factors. Within the context of childhood, poverty includes more than just low incomes; it can include denial of educational opportunities and access to good learning environments.

As per UNESCO

Educational poverty may be defined as a situation where children lack access to good education because of economic, institutional, and cultural factors.

As per the World Bank,

'Learning Poverty' is characterized as being unable to comprehend a basic text by age ten. It is an index measuring the failure on the part of access, attendance, and quality of education together. This phenomenon is highly concentrated among the impoverished in developing countries like India.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE LINKAGE OF POVERTY AND EDUCATION

[2]The relationship between poverty and education is a complex phenomenon involving several interrelated aspects which affect the ability of poor children to take advantage of education. It is vital to understand the different aspects and their contributing factors in order to realize why such disparities occur and what the broader implications are associated with it. There are several major factors that contribute to the problem of education deprivation of poor kids in India.

Firstly, economic stress leads to parents comparing the immediate cost savings from using their children as labor with the potential benefits of their education in the long run. Children are needed by poor families in rural India to assist in agriculture, household work, or trading activities; thus, it becomes economically unreasonable for them to pursue education. The 2011 census reported roughly 10.1 million child workers between the ages of five and fourteen in India, a number considered lower than reality due to the nature of labor in India.

Secondly, malnutrition affects children's mental and cognitive abilities. According to National Family Health Survey-5 conducted in 2019-21, about 35.5% of children under five suffer from stunting, 19.3% from wasting, and 32.1% from being underweight. Such a state negatively impacts their brain formation and leads to poor school preparedness and performance.

[3]Thirdly, lack of appropriate infrastructure in schools in areas of poverty makes attending school inefficient despite enrollment. The 2021–22 UDISE+ report reveals that there is a lack of functional toilets, library books, electricity, and electronic gadgets in schools in rural communities of India. Additionally, multi-grade classes taught by one teacher prevail, which does not allow students to learn anything.

[2]]Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Census of India 2011: Child Labour Data (Government of India 2013).

[3] Ministry of Education, UDISE+ 2021–22 (Department of School Education and Literacy 2022).

Social factors further exacerbate the existing economic ones. Discrimination against caste groups in schools, child marriages for girls, and concerns about security when girls travel long distances for classes hinder the active involvement of disadvantaged children in the schooling process. As mentioned earlier, the dropout rate among the secondary level was approximately 14.9% according to UDISE+ 2021-22, which was considerably higher among SC/ST groups and economically poor girls.

[4]To conclude, educational disadvantages for poor children are caused by a combination of economic, nutritional, infrastructure, and social issues. Solving them involves ensuring that there is school access, financial assistance, improved nutrition, high-quality teachers, and no discrimination.

TYPES OF POVERTY-DRIVEN EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION

- Economic Exclusion
- Urban-Rural Divide

TYPES OF EXCLUSION

- GenderExclusion
- Caste/Tribal Exclusion
- Economic Exclusion
- Educational Deprivation

Inability to Access Educational Resources

Children from poor families cannot afford private tuition, text books, stationery, uniforms and transport to the school. Costs of lost wages from labor, examination fees, uniforms etc., are a barrier to access where government schools offer free education. This economic exclusion puts poor children at the bottom of the education ladder, often in under-resourced schools and with demotivated teachers.

Banning from quality and higher education

India has evolved a dual system of education with the growth of private schooling, well-funded private schools for the economically privileged and poorly funded government schools for the poor. This systemic stratification restricts poor children from acquiring competitive skills and limits their ability to generate income and move up the social ladder. **The ASER** 2023 report revealed that in rural areas, a mere 42.8% of students in Class V were able to read a Class II-level text – a clear reflection of the learning poverty faced by children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

2. IMPACT OF POVERTY ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

1. Education:

Access to good quality schooling, nutrition and learning resources is not equal and has a major impact on educational outcomes especially in rural and tribal India. In the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of students from low-income backgrounds were unable to attend online classes due to lack of devices and internet access. Apart from this, barriers such as poor quality of teachers in government schools, lack of locally relevant curriculum and limited investment in educational infrastructure only add to the academic gap. This creates a viscous cycle whereby disadvantaged children do not learn basic literacy and numeracy skills thus closing the door to equal learning opportunities

[4]] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National Family Health Survey-5 2019–21: India Report (IIPS 2022).

2. Employment:
In knowledge economy skills and educational qualifications are a prerequisite for meaningful employment. But the early dropouts due to poverty deprive the underprivileged children to develop these competencies. This results in their exclusion from formal sector jobs in sectors like technology, finance, and public service. This feeds into a cycle of low-wage informal work and economic inequality, particularly in states where poverty is most entrenched and educational infrastructure is weakest.

3. Social mobility
The lack of quality education limits children born into poverty in terms of occupational opportunities and social mobility. Those who are not able to take part in meaningful formal education are excluded economically and socially.

As it evolves, it contributes to growing inequality and reduces opportunities for advancement, especially for groups such as the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Class, where structural discrimination intensifies the effects of economic deprivation.

3. DOES POVERTY DIMINISH CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND OUTCOMES?

Poverty affects children's educational aspirations and outcomes, but the relationship is complex, not deterministic. It can decrease the urgency of educational investment in poor households but does not necessarily eliminate the children's desire to learn. Many studies have shown that poor children and poor parents tend to value education as a way out of poverty; the problem is not attitude, but structural inability.

Poverty negatively impacts educational aspirations:

Children who see their parents trying hard but failing in poverty may develop learned helplessness, thereby decreasing the perceived returns to investment in education. There's often pressure on children to contribute to family income, meaning they have to abandon early hopes of education. The social stigma of being in under-resourced schools can also further erode children's sense of educational identity and belonging.

Resilience and the value of support systems:

Nonetheless, many poor children show remarkable educational resilience in the face of these barriers if adequately supported. Evidence shows that the presence of a dedicated teacher, a functioning mid-day meal program, or a conditional cash transfer to parents can significantly improve attendance and learning outcomes for poor children The Pratham and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) studies demonstrate that interventions that address specific barriers – such as remedial learning programs and school feeding programs – can lead to substantial gains in educational outcomes for children living in poverty.

Diminish in Learning Outcomes:

The impact of poverty-induced barriers to education is most clearly seen in learning outcome data. The ASER 2023 survey indicates that many children in rural government schools, especially children from poor households, are unable to perform grade-appropriate reading and arithmetic tasks. This "learning poverty" is not just about missing school, but about schools failing to deliver basic skills to poor children.

The Persistent Dropout and the Poverty Trap:

[5]The most severe manifestation of the impact of poverty on goals in education is the elevated rate of dropout at the secondary level, notably among poor girls and tribal children. Once outside the school system, re-entry is blocked by formidable structural barriers. Without secondary education access to formal employment is severely limited, perpetuating the intergenerational cycle of poverty and violating the constitutional promise of equality.

Policy Response and Legal Framework:

[6]The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) mandates education for children aged 6–14 and makes it legally binding for private unaided schools to reserve 25% seats for children belonging to economically weaker sections.[7]The National Education Policy 2020 also has Special Education Zones, the NIPUN Bharat mission for foundational literacy, and gender inclusion funds to address structural barriers. But implementation gaps—insufficient teacher training, infrastructure deficits, and fiscal underinvestment—continue to undermine these legislative commitments in practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To guarantee that no child is left outside the legal safety net, extend the constitutional right to education under Article 21-A from early childhood (ages 3–6) through Class XII.
2. Raise public spending on education to 6% of GDP, with ring-fenced funding for schools in urban slums, tribal territories, and economically disadvantaged districts.
3. To guarantee that meals fulfill recommended caloric levels, PM POSHAN should be strengthened by requiring third-party quality audits, nutrition-linked outcome assessments, and community monitoring.
4. Provide all students attending government schools with access to publicly owned digital infrastructure (devices, internet connectivity, and content), viewing digital access as a part of the right to education.
5. Enact a comprehensive ban on child labor for children under the age of 14 in all sectors, complete with strong enforcement measures and school-integrated rehabilitation programs.
6. Establish residential school programs for tribal and immigrant children, required SC/ST/girl-child sensitive school environment assessments, and anti-discrimination training for educators.

CONCLUSION

Millions of Indian children's educational experiences are completely reconfigured by poverty and poor quality of life, which perpetuates disadvantage across generations rather than just lowering school enrollment. The issue is multifaceted, structural, and has its roots in institutional failure, social prejudice, and economic inequality. Despite its progressive goals,

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[5] UNICEF India, COVID-19 and Children in India: Impact Assessment (UNICEF 2021).

[6] *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (India), ss 3, 12(1)(c); Ministry of Education, National Education Policy 2020 (Government of India 2020).*

[7] *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (India), ss 3, 12(1)(c); Ministry of Education, National Education Policy 2020 (Government of India 2020).*

India's legislative framework has not been able to remove these structural obstacles without matching institutional accountability, financial dedication, and political resolve.
The stakes are really high. Only when its sizable youthful population is well-educated, competent, and in good health will India's demographic dividend be realized. This demographic advantage could become a demographic liability if the poverty-education relationship is not addressed.

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16. Psychological Torture in Police Interrogations: Addressing the Challenge of Legal Invisibility

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ABSTRACT:

Psychological torture represents a pervasive violation of human rights that frequently evades accountability due to its non-physical nature. Unlike physical violence, which leaves tangible evidence, the mechanisms of mental suffering such as sensory deprivation, humiliation, and manipulated isolation are often legally invisible, making prosecution of perpetrators and protection of victims exceptionally difficult. This paper explores the gap between international prohibitions against torture and the reality of coercive law enforcement practices. It proposes a multi-faceted framework for addressing this invisibility, incorporating expanded legal definitions, enhanced training for judicial and law enforcement bodies, and the integration of technological oversight. Furthermore, the study examines the role of emerging technologies and neurodivergence, highlighting how tools like micro-expression analysis and conditions such as ADHD intersect with interrogation fairness. By analyzing these dimensions, the paper aims to contribute a robust approach to dismantling the systemic impunity surrounding psychological torture.

Keywords:

Psychological torture, Human dignity, Non Physical abuse, Severe mental pain, Fear and intimidation, Trauma and Long term harm, Sensory deprivation.

Introduction:

Psychological torture constitutes one of the most insidious forms of state-sanctioned violence, primarily because it is designed to be undetectable. While international human rights laws universally condemn torture, enforcement mechanisms often rely on evidence of physical injury, thereby creating a loophole for "clean" torture techniques that assault the mind rather than the body. In the context of police interrogations, these techniques are frequently rationalized as necessary for intelligence gathering or confession extraction, despite their profound long-term impact on the victim's psyche. The central problem addressed in this paper is the "legal invisibility" of these practices, where the lack of somatic evidence results in a failure to recognize severe mental suffering as a justiciable offense.

Legal Invisibility Across Global Jurisdictions:

Current legal frameworks in many global jurisdictions struggle to adequately define the threshold where aggressive questioning transitions into psychological torture. Existing approaches often rely on antiquated definitions of harm that fail to account for modern psychological understanding or the specific vulnerabilities of certain populations. For instance, individuals with behavioural disorders may be disproportionately affected by coercive environments, yet the law rarely accounts for these disparities. Furthermore, the integration of advanced technologies in interrogations, such as systems designed to analyse hidden emotional states, introduces new complexities regarding consent and mental privacy.

Nature and Characteristics of Mental Suffering:

The first category of related work focuses on the taxonomy of mental suffering within legal and psychological contexts. Mental suffering in interrogations is characterized by the intentional dismantling of a subject's cognitive defences and emotional stability. Research indicates that the severity of psychological torture is often equivalent to physical torture in terms of long-term post-traumatic stress, yet it lacks the "scars" required by many courts for

evidentiary validation. This discrepancy creates a reliance on subjective testimony, which is easily dismissed by defence strategies that frame coercive tactics as standard police work. The literature emphasizes that without a precise, evidence-based definition of mental suffering, the legal system remains complicit in its perpetuation.

Technological Integration:

The second area of literature examines the specific methods employed by law enforcement, ranging from isolation and sleep deprivation to the use of advanced surveillance technologies. In recent years, micro-expression recognition (MER) has gained attention for its potential application in police interrogations to detect "leakage" of true feelings during high-stakes situations. While proponents argue that MER facilitates truth-seeking, critics warn that the conscious or unconscious suppression of emotion analysed by these systems can be misinterpreted. If law enforcement relies on such technology to exert pressure based on fleeting facial movements, it may inadvertently contribute to a coercive environment, transforming a tool of analysis into an instrument of psychological dominance.

Analysing International Prohibitions and Practice:

The third category explores the dissonance between human rights laws and their practical application, particularly regarding vulnerable populations. While legal statutes theoretically protect all citizens, in practice, systemic biases compromise the fairness of interrogations. For example, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) impacts an individual's ability to navigate the high-pressure environment of a police interrogation, yet traditional diagnostic and legal methods often harbour racial and gender biases that ignore these nuances. Consequently, the gap between prohibition and practice is widest for marginalized groups, who are less likely to be believed when claiming psychological coercion. This section highlights that "fair and just police interrogations" are often inaccessible to those with behavioural disorders due to a lack of intersectional understanding in current protocols.

Legal Definitions:

This module focuses on legislative reform. It requires the codification of "psychological torture" as a distinct criminal offense with specific predicates, such as prolonged isolation, sensory manipulation, and the exploitation of known phobias or neurodivergence. This definition must move beyond the "severity" threshold of physical pain and instead focus on the intent to destabilize the personality and the effect of cognitive disorientation.

Law Enforcement Training:

This module mandates a revision of training curricula for police officers and judges. Law enforcement personnel must be trained to recognize that interrogation techniques designed to "break" a suspect often yield unreliable information and constitute torture. Training must also include awareness of technological limitations; for instance, while MER can analyse fine-grained changes in facial expressions, officers must understand that these are brief and subtle, making them challenging to analyse accurately without rigorous expertise. Furthermore, training must address bias, specifically ensuring that officers understand how conditions like ADHD affect behaviour, preventing the misinterpretation of neurodivergent symptoms as signs of guilt or resistance.

Strengthening for Victims:

The final module establishes protocols for immediate psychological assessment following interrogations. This involves creating a "chain of custody" for mental health status, akin to physical evidence handling. Independent forensic psychologists must evaluate detainees for signs of coerced confession and acute stress reactions immediately post-interrogation, creating a contemporaneous record of psychological state that can serve as evidence in court.

Consequences for Victim Protection:

The practical implication of the proposed framework is a significant shift in the balance of power within the interrogation room. By making psychological torture legally visible, victims particularly those from vulnerable demographics gain a mechanism for redress that was previously unavailable. Accountability for perpetrators moves from an administrative issue to a criminal one, deterring the use of "clean" torture techniques. However, this shift requires the judiciary to accept psychological evidence with the same weight as physical forensic evidence, a cultural change that may take decades to fully materialize.

Ethical Considerations:

The integration of technology in interrogations presents a dual-edged sword. While tools for micro-expression analysis can benefit police work by spotting concealed emotions in high-stakes situations, there is an ethical risk of over-reliance or misuse. If officers use MER data to accuse suspects of lying based on involuntary facial movements they do not understand, it could constitute a form of "technological gaslighting," escalating the psychological pressure. Additionally, ethical risks abound regarding bias; diagnostic and analytical technologies often fail to account for racial and gender stereotypes, potentially leading to skewed results for minority suspects. Therefore, the deployment of such tools must be strictly regulated to ensure they do not become instruments of psychological oppression.

Technological False Positives:

In the realm of micro-expression recognition, the challenge of analyzing fine-grained changes within a short time span remains significant. False positives in detecting "deception" could lead investigators to intensify coercive tactics on innocent individuals.

Future Work:

Future research must focus on developing objective biomarkers for psychological stress that can corroborate claims of torture. Additionally, further investigation is needed into the intersection of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and criminal justice to tackle the race and gender biases inherent in current diagnostic and interrogation technologies. Developing "fairness-aware" algorithms for interrogation analysis represents a critical next step in preventing automated prejudice.

Conclusion:

The legal invisibility of psychological torture in police interrogations remains a critical barrier to justice. By exploiting the lack of physical evidence, perpetrators evade accountability while victims suffer profound, often permanent, mental anguish. This paper has argued that bridging the gap between international prohibitions and actual practice requires a concerted effort to expand legal definitions, enhance training regarding neurodivergence and bias, and regulate the use of interrogation technologies. Addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations, such as those with ADHD who struggle to acquire fair interrogations, is paramount to this reform. Ultimately, the justice system must evolve to recognize that the scars of the mind are as real, and as violation-worthy, as those of the body.

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17. EFFECTIVENESS OF CBT (COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY) FOR ANXIETY AND DEPRESSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one of the most widely researched and empirically supported psychological treatments for anxiety and depressive disorders. This abstract examines the effectiveness of CBT in reducing symptoms, preventing relapse, and improving overall functioning among individuals experiencing anxiety or depression. CBT is based on the premise that maladaptive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interrelated and that modifying dysfunctional cognitive patterns can lead to meaningful emotional and behavioral change. Numerous randomized controlled trials and meta-analyses have demonstrated that CBT is significantly more effective than no treatment and comparable, or superior, to pharmacotherapy for mild to moderate anxiety and depression. Evidence also suggests that CBT produces more durable treatment gains, with lower relapse rates following treatment termination compared to medication alone. CBT has been shown to be effective across diverse populations, age groups, and delivery formats, including individual, group, and internet-based interventions.

KEY WORDS

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Anxiety disorders , Depression,
Mental Health Treatment, Evidence-Based Intervention, Psychotherapy.

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a widely recognized, evidence-based psychological intervention used in the treatment of anxiety and depressive disorders. [1]Developed from the cognitive theories of Aaron T. Beck in the 1960s, CBT is grounded in the principle that maladaptive thoughts influence emotions and behaviors. Anxiety and depression are among the most prevalent mental health conditions globally, contributing significantly to disability and reduced quality of life. CBT focuses on identifying, evaluating, and modifying dysfunctional

[1] Beck, A.T. (1976). **COGNITIVE THERAPY AND THE EMOTIONAL DISORDERS,** 2nd Edition.

thought patterns and beliefs, thereby improving emotional regulation and behavioral responses. Unlike traditional psychodynamic therapies, CBT is structured, time-limited, and problem-focused. Its growing popularity in clinical psychology is due to its empirical validation, adaptability across populations, and long-term effectiveness.

[2]Anxiety and depression are often maintained by negative automatic thoughts, cognitive distortions, and unhelpful behavioral patterns such as avoidance or withdrawal. CBT addresses these factors through techniques like cognitive restructuring, behavioral activation, and exposure therapy. By challenging irrational beliefs and replacing them with more balanced and realistic thoughts, individuals can experience significant reductions in symptoms. Additionally, behavioral strategies encourage engagement in meaningful activities, which can improve mood and reduce feelings of helplessness. Anxiety and depression are often maintained by negative automatic thoughts, cognitive distortions, and unhelpful behavioral patterns such as avoidance or withdrawal. CBT addresses these factors through techniques like cognitive restructuring, behavioral activation, and exposure therapy. By challenging irrational beliefs and replacing them with more balanced and realistic thoughts, individuals can experience significant reductions in symptoms. Additionally, behavioral strategies encourage engagement in meaningful activities, which can improve mood and reduce feelings of helplessness.

OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate how effective cognitive behavioral therapy is in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- To understand CBT helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors.
- To assess the impact of CBT on improving daily functioning and overall well-being.
- To examine the long-term benefits of CBT, including relapse prevention.
- To compare the effectiveness of CBT with other treatment approaches such as medication or alternative therapies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies supports the effectiveness of CBT anxiety and depression highlights its strong empirical support and widespread clinical application. The past few decades have demonstrated that CBT is highly effective, evidence-based intervention for both disorders.

1. Early foundational work by Aaron T. Beck established the cognitive model of emotional disorders, [3]emphasizing how negative thought patterns contribute to depression and anxiety. His research showed that modifying maladaptive cognitions leads to significant improvements in mood and functioning. Subsequent studies expanded on this framework, confirming that CBT techniques such as cognitive restructuring and behavioral activation reduce depressive symptoms effectively.
2. Steth J. Gillihan established the cognitive behavioral therapy outlines core strategies such as, [4]behavioral activation, cognitive restructuring and mindfulness to reduce

[2] World Health Organization (2023) **Depression and Other Common Mental Disorders.**
[3] Beck, A.T. (1979). **COGNITIVE THERAPY OF DEPRESSION,** 2nd Edition.
[4] Gillihan, S.J. (2016). **COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY 10 STRATEGIES,** 20th Edition.

anxiety and depression. He consolidate the scientific proof that be explains CBT's effectiveness in a proper, practical format accessed by both medical technician and lay readers.

3. Recent literature has also explored the effectiveness of CBT in different formats, including group therapy and digital or online platforms. Findings suggest that internet-based CBT can be as effective as face-to-face therapy for many individuals, increasing accessibility and affordability. Additionally, CBT has been successfully adapted across diverse populations and cultural settings, further supporting its versatility.

HYPOTHESIS

H_0: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is not significantly effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression.

H_1: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy does not improve coping skills and emotional regulation.

H_2: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is not more effective than no treatment.

EFFECTIVENESS OF CBT IN ANXIETY

[5]CBT has shown high efficacy in treating anxiety disorders such as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder. Exposure-based interventions help reduce avoidance behaviors and desensitize individuals to anxiety triggers. Clinical trials indicate that CBT produces significant reductions in anxiety symptoms, with long-term maintenance of therapeutic gains. Patients often develop coping strategies that enable them to manage anxiety independently after treatment completion.

Through CBT, individuals learn to identify and challenge these distorted thoughts using techniques like cognitive restructuring. They are guided to replace unrealistic fears with more balanced and rational thinking. At the same time, behavioral techniques such as exposure therapy help individuals gradually face feared situations instead of avoiding them, which reduces fear over time.

CBT also focuses on breaking the cycle of avoidance, which is a key factor in maintaining anxiety disorders. By encouraging gradual exposure and coping skills, individuals gain confidence and learn that feared outcomes are often less severe than expected.

EFFECTIVENESS OF CBT IN DEPRESSION

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a structured, evidence-based psychotherapy approach that is often used to treat depressions. [6]It is founded on the premise that a person's ideas, emotions, and behaviors are all interconnected, and that negative thinking patterns can be lead to low mood and depression symptoms. CBT seeks to disrupt the loop by identifying and altering unhelpful thoughts and behaviors.

In depression, individuals often develop distorted or negative automatic thoughts such as feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or excessive guilt. [7]These thoughts can worsen emotional distress and reinforce depressive feelings. CBT helps patients recognize these thought patterns, evaluate their accuracy, and replace them with more realistic and balanced thinking.

CBT uses a methods known as behavioral activation to focus on behavior improvements in addition to cognitive work. People who are depressed frequently stop engaging in activities

[5] Clark, D.A. (2010). **COGNITIVE THERAPY OF ANXIETY DISORDERS,** 1st Edition.

[6] Rush, A.J. (1979). **COGNITIVE THERAPY OF DEPRESSION,** 2nd Edition

[7]Cuijpers, P. (2013). **WORLD PSYCHIATRY,** Pages 4-33, Cited by 1631.

they used to enjoy, which exacerbates their depression. In order to gradually enhance mood and boost motivation.

CASE STUDY

Rahul S. – Student with Depression and Anxiety

Rahul S., a 24-year-old college student, presented with moderate depression and generalized anxiety, showing symptoms like low mood, excessive worry about failure, poor concentration, and social withdrawal. He frequently had negative thoughts such as "I am not capable" and "I will ruin my future." He was treated with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy over 12 sessions, focusing on identifying distorted thoughts and using behavioral activation techniques. He was encouraged to gradually resume studying, social interaction, and physical activity. Over time, Rahul showed reduced anxiety, improved mood, better academic engagement, and increased confidence.

Anita K." – Working Professional with Depression

Anita K., a 32-year-old working woman, reported persistent sadness, irritability, fatigue, and feelings of worthlessness after workplace stress and repeated failures in performance evaluations. She avoided office interactions and lost interest in hobbies. CBT was used to challenge her negative beliefs like "I am a failure at everything" and to restructure her thinking patterns. Behavioral strategies included scheduling pleasant activities and setting small achievable work goals. After 10–14 sessions, Anita reported improved emotional stability, better workplace performance, and reduced depressive symptoms.

CONCLUSION

CBT has proven to be an effective psychological intervention for managing both anxiety and depression by targeting the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It helps individuals to break negative cycles of thinking that contribute to emotional distress and replace them with more realistic and balanced perspectives. In clinical practice, CBT consistently improves symptoms such excessive concern, depression, avoidance behavior, and lack of drive in therapeutic settings. Patients can make steady but incremental improvements their daily functioning and emotional well-being. There is a key advantage of empowering individuals to become self-sufficient in managing their mental health. Patients can also built long-term resilience to stress and emotional setbacks by adopting coping skills and cognitive restructuring procedures.

CBT has some limitations, the overall effectiveness of CBT in improving mental health outcomes is well-established. Further research can focus on integrating CBT with modern technology such as online therapy platforms to increase accessibility. Overall, CBT is a reliable and practical treatment option for anxiety and depression, offering both symptom relief and lasting psychological skills that support recovery and prevent relapse.

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18. DNA EVIDENCE AS SILENT WITNESS: STANDARDS, RELIABILITY, AND JUDICIAL SCRUTINY.

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ABSTRACT:

Crime has always been there in human life from very old times and never stops. Ways of doing crime change when new science and technology come. Criminals become smart, and sometimes no normal proof is left; then forensic science becomes very important to find out crime. So, solving crime needs biological proof, which can only be known by forensic methods. DNA, called deoxyribonucleic acid, is the main molecule of inheritance. DNA is in every cell of the human body. DNA is a natural material which gives each person their own special genetic code. It can be found in bone, blood, hair, spit, sperm and other body tissue. This paper looks at how DNA technology becomes important in making the criminal justice system fairer and correct. It gives a short introduction about DNA, how it is used, and why such evidence matters in Indian courts. The law is already there about accepting and using DNA evidence; also look briefly. Also, this study sees by some important case laws how Indian courts allow DNA evidence in their own way. It finishes by showing the urgent need for proper law to control DNA technology in India. Surely, DNA is very important in crime cases like murder, rape, paternity, and accidents made by people. But the laws in India, do not have clear rules for dealing with forensic science problems. So, it is very clear that the discovery of DNA has opened new avenues, and the advancement of DNA technology and its introduction in the courts of law have provided extensive aid in their solution of civil and criminal disputes.

Keywords: Crime, Forensic Science, DNA, Criminal Justice System, Murder, evidence.

INTRODUCTION

Crime has always existed in some form or another since the dawn of human civilisation. With the growth of science and technology, crimes and criminals become cleverer. Because of this, police work cannot only rely on old ways like asking questions, collecting information, or watching people to find crimes. Also, cruel ways to catch criminals are not allowed in good society.

Forensic science, which is a science to help police in solving crimes, has now become very important in recent years. In India, DNA proof now matters big in cases like killing, rape, paternity, and accidents from careless people. So, courts make big rulings on how DNA gets used and how much weight it has in law. This research paper wants to study how DNA evidence is handled in India law. It looks at how rules changed, safety in procedure, and constitutional matters. By looking at big court decisions, laws, and current practice, paper wants to show why DNA is important for justice. DNA evidence in India is admissible as expert opinion under Section 45 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872[1] (now Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023),

[1] Goutam Kundu V. State of West Bengol (1993) 3 SCC 418

primarily used to identify suspects or establish paternity. While not covered by a specific statute, courts admit it based on reliability and scientific validity.

WHAT IS DNA?

Deoxyribonucleic Acid, commonly known as DNA is an important unit of the human body that contains genetic programs of an individual. These programs are coded by special chemical compounds known as bases. These bases are Guanine, Cytosine, Thymine, and Adenine which are typically arranged in long sequences. The basic building blocks of life that are known as codons are groups of three bases. Genetically relevant information represents 10% of the human genome that is subject to evolutionary pressure that affects the development of organisms.

EVOLUTION OF DNA ANALYSIS IN FORENSIC INVESTIGATION:

The first ever evidence of using DNA identification in forensics can be traced to 1986 when UK police used DNA traces to verify the suspect's confession in a case where he was held accountable for the rape and murder of two innocent people. However, later based on the findings of the tests it was clear that the suspect was not the actual offender. But instead of this method being scientific in nature, the DNA evidence collected from the crime site or the offender was not allowed to be submitted as authentic evidence in a court of law.

The use of DNA or any other biological evidences is something which is not new in India. Although there is no proper legislation directly dealing with these biologically evidences, specifically DNA Profiling, but time and again we have found these evidences of much relevance in solving many crucial cases. DNA profiling is not only used in criminal investigation but it is also helpful in ascertaining parentage, legitimacy of child, missing persons and discovering unknown deceased bodies.

ADMISSIBILITY OF DNA IN INDIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

DNA evidence was first accepted by the courts in India in 1985.The method of DNA profiling used today in India is based on polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and uses short tandem repeats (STR). These techniques have revolutionized the speed and efficiency of the DNA test. These techniques are very reliable in various countries. As the DNA test provides perfect identity but its admissibility before the court always depends on its accurate and proper collection, preservation and documentation which can be believed to be reliable enough to be used as evidence. DNA can reveal very personal information about an individual like medical and family history, and location, unlike other types of identifiers, such as fingerprints. Thus, having a DNA database with a broad scope and adding more DNA profiles onto a database, increases the potential for misuse of information stored on the database, because there is a lot of chance for identification, trailing of people, and access to private data.

IMPORTANCE OF DNAANALYSIS IN FORENSICS:

The relevance of DNA in forensic analysis has grown to another level. It is because of its strong use in the identification of a criminal, victim, or suspect by using DNA markers, statistical analysis, and the present records in databases[2]. It enhances the information gathering and identification of species ability thus helping in case solving. The unique ability of DNA technology to be used as an identification tool has led to tremendous success in case solving and thus efficiently delivers justice to the victims.

[2] Sharda V. Dharmpal, (2003) 4 SCC 493, Hajira Beevi & Ors. V. Shamila P. Iqbal & Anr, AIR 2004 Ker 240

DNA analysts use this technique for the following purposes:

- Identify criminal,
- Determine the parentage,
- Identification of people who died in an accident,
- Establish relationship status, etc.

BENEFIT OF DNA ANALYSIS

• Accuracy

The DNA evidence is more reliable over Narco analysis as a result it is getting widely accepted. The narcotic analysis is a subjective method due to which there arises a possibility for people to fool it. People can lie but DNA does not lie. There have been doubts earlier that 2 twins can have identical DNA sequence. But now due to advancement in technology it has been established that no two twins can have same DNA. Narco analysis isn't accepted as evidence by the courts due to its unreliability.

DNA EVIDENCE IN INDIAN COURTS

Currently, there are no concrete regulations in India to do with the eligibility of DNA Profiling or forensics. Though there are certain provisions of the Code of Criminal procedure and Indian Evidence Act, 1872 regulating medical and technological matters, but they are quite implicit. It is hence left exclusively on the judges, either to approve or to refuse DNA testing[3]. This tends to cause chaos and ambiguity when ensuring justice. Therefore, it is based on whether the technique of DNA collection and testing is legitimate or not, and if the Courts are convinced with the authenticity of the DNA test, only then is it acceptable.

CONFLICT BETWEEN FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND ADMISSIBILITY OF DNA PROFILING EVIDENCE

The legitimateness of DNA profiling in India remains somewhat dicey, competing between justice and privacy. The Court's right to order a person to take a DNA test can violate the **Right to privacy under Article 21** and **Right against Self-incrimination under Article 20(3) of the Indian constitution**, which shields an offender from presenting evidence against him. And this is why the Indian courts are often hesitant to consider proof based on DNA profiling techniques. it can be observed that the admissibility of the DNA Evidence in India is subjected to a confusing legal position due to the absence of specific DNA technology laws. Hence, it is very volatile, provided that the judiciary interprets each case differently.

JUDICIAL VIEW AND CASE LAWS:

1) Kunihiraman V. Manoj Singh
   The first Case of DNA test was from Kerala. When the matter was brought before the Court, The CJM ordered a DNA test for the paternity of the child. The facts of this case are as follows: - In the present case, a village girl filed a case against Kunhiraman for the maintenance of her child born out of her and Kunhiraman's love. The court, as per

[3] Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Haldwani, Nainital

section 45 of the Evidence Act, accepted DNA evidence as an expert opinion as it required scientific examination[4]. The court ordered a DNA Test conducted at CCMB Hyderabad, and it was proved that Kunhiraman was the father of the child. The verdict was upheld by the Kerala High Court, which held that the DNA test is enough to prove the paternity of a child. The result of the DNA Test is conclusive in deciding paternity.

2) Sharda vs dhrampal

In this case, the parties were married in 1991 in accordance with the Hindu rites and ceremonies. The respondent (husband) filed an application for divorce against the appellant pursuant to **Section 12(1)(b)** and **Section 13(1)(iii)** of the **Hindu Marriage Act** on the grounds of **unsoundness of mind**[5], such that petitioner (wife) cannot be reasonably expected to live with him. The respondent filed an application asking directions from the court to **medically examine the appellant**. The appellant objected *inter alia* on the grounds that the court does not have the jurisdiction to issue such directions. Dissatisfied with the outcome of the trial court, the Appellant challenged the decision in the Rajasthan High Court through a revision petition. When this was dismissed, the Appellant further appealed the matter to the Supreme Court in an instant appeal.

CONCLUSION:

DNA analysis is a very crucial invention which helps the legal experts to solve many such crimes which were not possible to solve before as no evidence were present. This invention saved many lives and convicted the guilty providing justice to many people. DNA Science proved to be very useful for public at large as there are many examples present which clearly indicates that it really helped the common people to get justice. The Courts have considered the reliability of DNA testing and also included the results of DNA test as evidence. The DNA evidence can punish or acquit a suspect in the court of Law. However, the accuracy of the technique has been challenged many times but its fruitfulness cannot be denied. This is a great example of how scientific technology has reached the common man to ensure justice. It helps to resolve paternity cases, and is useful in identification, crime investigations and other legal matters.

[4] Kunihiraman V. Manoj Singh

[5] Sharda vs dhrampal

19. The Equal Remuneration Act: A Step Toward Pay Equity and Justice

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ABSTRACT
In a society that values gender equality, a crucial principle is to guarantee fair compensation for the same work regardless of gender. Although progress has been made, the persistent problem of pay inequality between men and women continues to affect societies worldwide. India, as a developing nation with the largest population, boasts a substantial workforce contributing to the affordability of labour costs. Individuals are willing to accept compensation lower than the government-mandated minimum wage. Asymmetries have emerged within India's labour market. In addition to being paid less than the minimum wage, the workforce also encounters discrimination based on factors such as caste, religion, marital status, and gender. This further exacerbates the current disparity in wages between genders in India. According to the latest World Inequality Report of 2022, gender disparities in India are alarmingly significant. In 2020, women received almost 18% of the total labour income, the lowest globally. To foster economic growth and promote social justice among working communities, it is crucial to tackle wage inequalities in workplaces and enable marginalized groups to attain a decent quality of life to meet their basic needs. The doctrine of "equal pay for equal work", in simplest terms, can be defined as a concept of paying fairly to people based on the work provided to them irrespective of their gender, caste, religion, sex, marital status, etc. In this article, one can find key issues faced by women at workplace and laws that are implemented to ensure an equal pay for everyone with related case laws. The methodology that was adopted for this is doctrinal research.
Key words : gender equality, minimum wage, workplace, discrimination, Case laws.

INTRODUCTION :
India has shown impressive advancements in protecting the workforce through labour laws since achieving independence. The Constitution of India, through its Preamble and detailed provisions, aims to promote equality and equitable opportunities for every individual in economic endeavours, irrespective of gender. Article 39(d)3 highlights the significance of guaranteeing fair remuneration for the same work performed by both genders. This principle is further supported by various international agreements, including the International Labour Organization Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951. Despite continuous endeavours, obstacles persist in specific industries like construction, agriculture, and transportation, where concerns regarding wage discrimination endure. Although the Minimum Wages Act of 1948 prohibits the differentiation of minimum wage rates based on gender, discrepancies persist. Various factors, including negotiated agreements, employers' economic capabilities, and market competitiveness, influence the formation of wage structures. To effectively address these challenges, it is essential to address discrimination in key areas like fair compensation, job access, career advancements, and leadership roles. The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 was enacted by the Indian Parliament on Feburary 11, 1976 with an aim to provide that male and female employees are compensated fairly and equally, while also working towards eliminating any discrimination based on gender. And mostly, it will not override any special

treatment provided to women in the country. It extends to the whole of India including all establishments either public or private sectors (employing 10 or more persons).

STATUTORY PROVISIONS :

The legal principle of "Equal Pay for Equal Work" is a recognized concept in the Constitution of India, articulated not as a fundamental right but as a constitutional objective. It falls within Part IV Directive Principles of State Policy as per Article 39(d)2 which states that “there is equal pay for equal work regardless of gender”. This doctrine cannot be put in a straight jacket but if read with Article 14, 15, and 16 of the Indian Constitution, it gains significant constitutional value. In the case of Randhir Singh v. Union of India, the court emphasized that the principle of "Equal pay for equal work" is not just a theoretical concept but holds significant substance. It was underlined that Directive Principles should be considered in conjunction with fundamental rights as a part of the interpretation process.

Article 39(d) of the Indian Constitution is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy and mandates that the State shall direct its policy towards securing that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women. This provision emphasizes the principle of gender equality in the workplace by ensuring that individuals performing the same work or work of similar value are compensated equally, regardless of their gender. It reflects the commitment of the Indian state to address gender-based wage disparities and to promote fairness in employment practices, thereby advancing social justice and equity in the society. Although Directive Principles are not justiciable, they serve as important guidelines for the government in making laws and policies.

Besides the Constitution of India, some other legislations emphasize pay parity which is discussed below in brief :

The Workmen’s Compensation Act,1923 :

The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 stands as a crucial labour law in India, ensuring that workers receive compensation in case of injuries or fatalities resulting from accidents during the course of their employment. It was established with the aim of safeguarding the rights of workers and providing financial assistance to workers or their dependents following workplace accidents. Employers are liable to compensate workers for injuries sustained during the course of employment, irrespective of fault. The Act covers a wide range of injuries, including those resulting in death, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, or temporary disablement. Employers are liable to compensate workers for injuries sustained during the course of employment, irrespective of fault. This also covers a wide range of injuries, including those resulting in death, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, or temporary disablement. The compensation is calculated based on the severity of the injury and the worker's wages. Specific formulas determine the amount payable to the worker or their family, with provisions for medical expenses, rehabilitation, and death benefits. The Act does not cover injuries caused by self-inflicted harm, injuries during strikes or riots, or injuries due to the worker’s own negligence. Over time, the Act has been amended to increase compensation limits and include a wider category of workers. Notably, the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, replaced the Workmen's Compensation Act in 2009, although the original law still applies to certain older cases.

The Minimum wages Act, 1948 :

The Minimum Wages Act of 1948 was introduced to benefit the welfare of workers. The Act ensured that labourers in specific industries would receive a minimum wage, safeguarding them from exploitation by business owners and enabling them to maintain a dignified quality of life. The Act applies to both organized and unorganized sectors, including workers employed in factories, construction, agriculture, and other manual labour industries. The central and state governments are empowered to fix the minimum wages for various categories of workers in different sectors, considering factors such as the nature of work, skill levels, geographic

location, and prevailing living conditions. The Act stipulates that employers must pay at least the minimum wages to workers for their services, ensuring that the wages are sufficient to meet the basic needs of workers and their families. The Act also provides for the revision of minimum wages from time to time, to reflect changes in the cost of living and economic conditions. Under the Act, employers who fail to comply with the prescribed minimum wages are liable for penalties, including fines or imprisonment. Additionally, workers have the right to approach labour courts or tribunals if their wages fall below the legal threshold. The Act also grants the state government the authority to create advisory boards to recommend wage rates and make adjustments based on economic factors. Nonetheless, the Act is a vital piece of labour legislation in India, aimed at safeguarding the dignity and welfare of the working class by ensuring fair compensation for their labour.

The Equal remuneration Act of 1976 :

The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 was put into effect with the aim of ensuring equal pay for both men and women. The Act was introduced as part of India's commitment to upholding the principles of social justice and promoting gender equality, in line with the provisions of the Indian Constitution. The primary aim of the Act was to eradicate workplace discrimination based on gender and ensure that all employees, regardless of their gender, receive fair pay for their work. One interesting aspect of this Act is that if the remuneration rate was higher before its implementation, the employer is not allowed to lower the rate to meet the requirements of the Act. Instead, the highest rate must be maintained. The Act applies to all establishments, including government and private sectors, and covers a wide range of industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, services, and more. It prohibits discrimination in wages, allowances, and other benefits based on gender, requiring that both male and female workers be compensated equally for jobs that require the same skills, effort, and responsibilities. This also specifies that employers must not discriminate against female employees in terms of hiring, training, promotions, and other employment conditions. In cases of violations, the Act provides for legal recourse, enabling employees to file complaints with the appropriate authorities or labour courts if they experience wage disparity or other forms of gender-based discrimination. Employers found guilty of non-compliance may face penalties, including fines or imprisonment.

Code on Wages, 2019 replaced the Equal Remuneration Act (ERA) :

The Code on Wages, 2019 has taken the place of the Equal Remuneration Act (ERA). Great strides have been made in expanding the concept of equal pay for equal work beyond just the traditional gender binary of men and women. Therefore, members of the LGBTQI+ community are entitled to receive fair pay for equal work. The Code has eliminated Section 16 of ERA, which previously allowed the government to adjust pay based on gender for men and women. Despite significant progress being made, the code still falls short in clearly defining the concept of "work of equal value," ultimately leaving it up to the courts for interpretation. Nevertheless, the phrase has been narrowly interpreted by the courts.

CHALLENGES IN ENFORCING EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK :

The implementation of this principle faces several significant challenges in India. Despite the legal framework and various initiatives to promote gender equality in the workplace, a combination of social, cultural, legal, and economic factors has hindered the effective enforcement of equal pay for equal work.

1. Wage Discrimination Based on Gender :

One of the primary challenges is the deep-rooted gender wage gap, where women are often paid less than men for performing the same or similar work. This gap is a result of persistent social and cultural biases that perceive women’s work as less valuable or less skilled than men’s. Such biases are ingrained in both formal and informal sectors, making it difficult to enforce equal pay practices. Even when women do the same work as men, their contributions

are frequently undervalued, and they are paid lower wages, even in the face of legal frameworks designed to ensure equality.

2. Unclear or Inconsistent Definition of "Equal Work":

One of the fundamental challenges in implementing equal pay for equal work is the ambiguity surrounding the definition of "equal work." In many cases, employers argue that the tasks performed by male and female workers, although seemingly similar, may have subtle differences that justify pay discrepancies. For instance, women may be assigned less complex or less responsible roles, even if the overall job title is the same. This lack of clarity in defining "equal work" often leads to legal loopholes and disputes, which complicate efforts to ensure pay equality.

3. Discrimination in Unorganized Sectors :

While there are regulations to ensure equal pay in the organized sector (e.g., government jobs, formal private sector employment), the unorganized or informal sector, which employs a significant portion of India's workforce—especially women—is often left out of the scope of these protections. Informal employment lacks the regulatory oversight needed to enforce pay equality, and many workers, particularly women, in these sectors remain vulnerable to exploitation. In domestic work, agricultural labour, and small-scale industries, there is little to no accountability for wage discrepancies, making it extremely difficult to address the issue of unequal pay.

4. Cultural and Societal Norms :

India's patriarchal social structure contributes significantly to the challenges in enforcing equal pay for equal work. Cultural norms often position women as secondary earners or as individuals whose primary role is caregiving, rather than economic participation. This perception influences employers' attitudes towards women's work, leading to unequal compensation. Additionally, there is a tendency to associate certain jobs with specific genders, where women are placed in lower-paying, "gendered" roles, such as teaching, nursing, or domestic work, which are traditionally undervalued despite their societal importance.

5. Lack of Awareness and Legal Enforcement :

A significant barrier to enforcing equal pay laws is the lack of awareness among workers, especially women, about their rights. Many employees, particularly in rural or remote areas, are unaware of their legal entitlement to equal pay, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Furthermore, even in cases where employees are aware of their rights, the legal system often fails to provide effective enforcement mechanisms. The slow pace of litigation, coupled with an overburdened judicial system, means that workers may have to wait for years to receive justice in wage discrimination cases, if at all.

6. Unconscious Bias and Stereotyping in the Workplace :

Unconscious gender bias in hiring, promotion, and salary-setting practices continues to be a significant challenge in many organizations. Women are often stereotyped as being less committed or capable than their male counterparts, especially when they take career breaks for child-rearing or family responsibilities. Such biases result in women being offered lower salaries or fewer opportunities for career advancement, which directly impacts their earning potential. Even when women hold the same positions as men, these biases can lead to unequal treatment in salary negotiations and promotions.

LANDMARK CASE LAWS :

1. Randhir Singh v. Union of India :

In this case, the Supreme Court of India opted for a fair and equitable approach, straying from strict legal interpretations to provide support for the employees. The court carefully analyzed the Preamble of the Constitution, focusing on the interpretation of the term "Socialist" as intended by the founding figures. The concept of equal pay for equal work stems from the provisions outlined in Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution. It is applicable in situations where

employees performing the same tasks for the same employer are receiving unequal pay due to their classification. The court emphasized the significance of guaranteeing equal compensation for comparable work, in accordance with the principles set forth in Articles 14 and 16. Moreover, the court took into account the Directive Principle outlined in Article 39(d) and found inspiration from the Preamble.

2. M/s Mackinnon Mackenzie and Co. Ltd. v. Audrey D'Costa :

Here, a Female employee was subjected to unjust treatment in the way her salary was paid. The employer stated that her role as a confidential stenographer warranted a different salary scale. However, the court dismissed this argument and recognized the woman as a full-time employee entitled to equal pay. The court pointed out that the choice to have only female confidential stenographers was a decision taken by management, not due to any specific gender qualifications or disqualifications for the role. Despite previous practices, it is crucial to guarantee that women receive equal pay as mandated by the Equal Remuneration Act. The court underlined the importance of providing fair compensation to all employees, regardless of their gender, in its judgment. The ruling set a benchmark for ensuring fair treatment and fair pay for women in the workplace, highlighting the principles of gender equality and fairness in employment practices.

3. Inder Singh & Others v. Vyas Muni Mishra & Others :

The court highlighted the significance of fair remuneration, stressing that individuals in comparable roles carrying out identical tasks should be entitled to equal pay. The decision was taken to ensure fairness by removing any discrimination among individuals who are on the same level. Likewise, with regard to Mackinnon Mackenzie and Co. In the case of Ltd. v. Audrey D'Costa and Another, the court offered additional clarification on the understanding of "same work or work that is similar in nature" as outlined in section 2(h) of the Act. The court underscored the importance of a thorough analysis, considering significant practical differences. Emphasizing the significance of acknowledging differences in similar endeavors is crucial, as these distinctions should not detract from the goal of promoting equality irrespective of trivial factors. The court emphasized the importance of assessing the duties currently performed, rather than solely focusing on those that could possibly be completed. It highlighted the importance of comparing the tasks carried out by individuals of all genders.

4. Bhagwan Dass & Others v. State of Haryana & Others :

In the case Bhagwan dass v State of Haryana, the Court set forth a substantial principle concerning equal pay. It was established that the principles of equal pay for equal work apply consistently, regardless of the specific method used for selecting employees or their terms of appointment, because the nature of work and functions performed are similar. This ruling emphasizes the significance of guaranteeing fair compensation for employees carrying out similar tasks, irrespective of how they were chosen or the length of their appointment. This principle focuses on ensuring fairness by making sure that all employees are treated equally, regardless of the circumstances surrounding their selection or hire.

5. People's Union for Democratic Rights and Others v. Union of India :

In this case, the petitioners expressed worries regarding the discrepancy in wages paid to construction workers, particularly based on their gender. Women employees were remunerated at the rate of Rs. Seven per day, while the male counterparts were paid Rs.9.25 per day. The government has been instructed by the Supreme Court to guarantee adherence to the Equal Remuneration Act, with the objective of prohibiting contractors from underpaying female workers. The Court referenced the breach of Article 14 of the Constitution in its ruling.

CONCLUSION :

The concept of ensuring fair compensation for the same work has been respected and upheld in India through a blend of constitutional clauses, legal actions, and court decisions, even though it is not directly stated as a fundamental right in the Indian Constitution. Articles 14,

15, and 16, as well as Article 39(d) within the Directive Principles of State Policy, establish a constitutional framework promoting wage equality. Moreover, regulations such as the Equal Remuneration Act and the Code on Wages further support the principle by requiring equal compensation for comparable tasks. Nonetheless, the obstacles in ensuring fair compensation for comparable work, especially in informal industries and in rectifying gender-related pay gaps, continue to pose a substantial challenge. Judicial interventions have played a key role in broadening the principle's scope. However, the absence of strong enforcement systems and low worker awareness remains a barrier to its complete implementation. In conclusion, while equal pay for equal work may not be expressly recognized as a fundamental right in India, it has transformed into an enforceable entitlement through the judiciary's comprehension of the equality clauses in the Constitution. As India progresses economically, there is a call for additional steps to close the disconnect between legal regulations and their actual application, guaranteeing that every worker receives fair and equal payment for their labour.

20. THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AS A FORM OF SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION: A SOCIO-LEGAL ANALYSIS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Discrimination persists in both overt and covert forms despite constitutional guarantees of equality and dignity. While India's Constitution provides strong protections — Article 14 (equality before law), Article 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth), Article 16 (equality in public employment), and Article 21 (right to life with dignity) — these frameworks have not fully eliminated discriminatory practices. Beyond traditional grounds like caste, race, and gender, discrimination today extends into education, employment, sports, and cultural participation, often driven by external personality traits and subjective social perceptions that fall outside existing statutory classifications. This creates significant legal gaps, leaving affected individuals without adequate remedies. Such exclusion erodes individual dignity and undermines constitutional morality.This paper adopts a socio-legal approach to examine discrimination rooted in external personality and social identity, analysing its impact across key sectors and evaluating existing legal mechanisms, with the aim of proposing a broader framework for equality-based governance.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted in this study is primarily non-doctrinal in character.[1] Data has been collected through review of popular opinion, interviews with subject-matter experts and persons of social standing, and analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles that document the problem of the digital divide and its relationship to discrimination in modern society. The study also examines both the challenges — particularly the communication gaps engendered by the digital divide — and the developmental opportunities arising from advances in information and communication technology (ICT) across nations.

III. RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research examines how the digital divide operates as a form of social discrimination. Despite remarkable technological progress, many individuals and communities continue to lack access to digital infrastructure and digital literacy, thereby limiting their participation in education, employment, and civic life.

[1] *Aithor, "Non-Doctrinal Research Methodology in Legal Studies,"* Aithor.com, https://www.aithor.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

Digital platforms may promote development and connectivity, but they simultaneously create barriers for marginalised groups. This inequality results in reduced opportunities, social exclusion, and limited access to essential services such as online education, digital banking, and e-governance. Accordingly, the digital divide is not merely a technological phenomenon but a socio-legal concern requiring legislative attention and policy intervention.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the concept and dimensions of the digital divide.
- To analyse how digital inequality leads to social discrimination.
- To study the impact of digital communication on social relationships.
- To evaluate the reliability and risks of digital media content.
- To identify groups most affected by digital exclusion.
- To suggest policy measures to reduce digital inequality.

V. THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN SOCIETY: DEFINITION AND DIMENSIONS

A. Definition of the Digital Divide

The digital divide is defined differently by various international bodies and organisations. The following are the most widely accepted definitional frameworks: According to the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**,[2] the digital divide refers to inequalities among individuals or social groups in their ability to access, use, and benefit from information and communication technologies (ICTs). These inequalities arise from differences in income, education, location, gender, skills, and infrastructure, which shape participation in the digital society.According to **UNESCO**,[3] the digital divide is understood as the gap between groups in their capacity to access knowledge, information, and digital resources, and to use them for social, cultural, educational, and economic advancement. It reflects broader structural inequalities that influence inclusion in knowledge-based societies.According to the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**,[4] the digital divide is defined as persistent differences between social groups in access to digital tools, digital skills, and the ability to translate digital participation into social and economic benefits.

B. Factors Contributing to the Digital Divide

The digital divide is a complex issue that extends beyond simple access to technology.[5] It involves multiple interconnected factors that influence how effectively individuals can participate in the digital world. Understanding these dimensions and their underlying causes is essential for identifying the roots of digital exclusion and its wider impact on economic

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[2] *International Telecommunication Union (ITU), "Measuring the Information Society Report 2023,"* ITU Publications, https://www.itu.int (last visited Apr. 2025).

[3] *UNESCO, "Towards Knowledge Societies: UNESCO World Report,"* UNESCO Publishing, Paris (2005), https://www.unesco.org.

[4] *OECD, "Bridging the Digital Divide: Issues and Policies in OECD Countries,"* OECD Publications, https://www.oecd.org (last visited Apr. 2025).

[5] *The Times of India, "The Digital Divide: Causes and Consequences,"* thetimesofindia.indiatimes.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

inequality. There is no single explanation for why the digital divide exists. Its causes are varied and operate at both global and local levels.

First, the rapid expansion of the internet has created unequal levels of technological development across countries. Many developing nations struggle to keep pace with continuous technological change, resulting in low internet penetration and limited access to digital resources. The digital divide is not only about having or not having technology; it also reflects differences in the quality of available technology. Some regions lack high-speed internet, modern computers, reliable technical support, or even basic telecommunications infrastructure.

Second, economic inequality plays a significant role.[6] The adoption of new technologies often begins with wealthier individuals and countries that have the financial capacity to experiment and invest in innovation. Because new technologies are initially expensive, they remain inaccessible to poorer populations and developing nations. Over time, as technologies become more affordable and widely tested, access tends to expand. However, this process is gradual, and the delay creates temporary but significant inequalities in information access, industrial development, and economic growth.

Third, social mobility influences digital access and usage.[7] Even when technology is available, not everyone can equally benefit from it. Educational opportunities, especially technical education, are unevenly distributed. Schools in lower socio-economic areas often lack adequate digital infrastructure, such as computers and internet connectivity. As a result, students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive fewer opportunities to develop digital skills, limiting their future prospects and reinforcing social inequality.

Finally, language barriers also contribute significantly to the digital divide. A large proportion of online content is available primarily in English or other dominant global languages. Individuals who are not proficient in these languages face difficulty accessing and benefiting from digital information. This linguistic gap restricts meaningful participation in the digital environment, particularly in multilingual societies such as India. In summary, the digital divide arises from a combination of technological, economic, social, and linguistic factors.[8] Addressing it requires not only expanding access to digital infrastructure but also improving affordability, education, and language accessibility to ensure inclusive participation in the digital world.

C. Types of the Digital Divide

The digital divide may be categorised into the following principal types:

① **Economic Divide** — Inequality in access to digital tools and platforms owing to financial constraints.

② **Urban–Rural Divide** — Disparity in digital infrastructure availability between urban and rural regions.

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[6] *World Bank, "World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends,"* World Bank Publications, Washington D.C. (2016), https://www.worldbank.org.

[7] *ScienceDirect, "Social Mobility and Digital Access: A Comparative Study,"* Sciencedirect.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

[8] *ScienceDirect, "Overcoming Digital Inequality: Policy Frameworks and Interventions,"* Sciencedirect.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

③ **Educational Divide** — Gap in digital literacy and skills arising from unequal educational opportunities.

④ **Employment Divide** — Exclusion from digital economies and high-skilled employment due to lack of digital competence.

VI. IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

A. Impact on Education

Unequal access to digital resources such as computers, smartphones, and stable internet has significantly affected education, especially in developing and rural areas.[9] During the COVID-19 pandemic, many students from low-income backgrounds were unable to attend online classes due to lack of these basic facilities. Additionally, barriers such as poor digital literacy among teachers, lack of locally relevant content, and limited government investment in digital infrastructure further widen the educational gap. This creates a cycle in which disadvantaged students are unable to acquire essential digital skills, limiting equal learning opportunities.

B. Impact on Employment

In a digitalised economy, digital skills are essential for employment. However, limited access to training and technology prevents underprivileged individuals from gaining these skills. As a result, they are excluded from high-paying jobs in sectors such as technology, finance, and e-commerce. Employers often prefer candidates with digital proficiency, which increases discrimination against the digitally disadvantaged. This leads to a cycle of unemployment and economic inequality, particularly in developing countries where infrastructure and literacy levels remain low.

C. Impact on Social Mobility

The lack of digital access restricts both education and employment opportunities, which directly affects social mobility. Individuals who cannot participate in the digital economy remain economically and socially excluded. Over time, this deepens inequality and reduces opportunities for upward movement in society, especially among marginalised communities.

VII. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION

A. Overview

Digital communication has significantly transformed interpersonal interaction by enabling fast, accessible, and widespread information exchange.[10] While it may reduce the frequency of direct face-to-face communication, it does not necessarily weaken interpersonal relationships. Instead, it often complements traditional interaction by maintaining connections across distances and supporting collaborative environments such as corporate and online learning spaces. Moreover, digital platforms can encourage prosocial behaviour, such as sharing information and offering support, when used responsibly. Therefore, rather than replacing

[9] *Pew Research Center, "Digital Divides 2015,"* Pew Research Center (Sep. 22, 2015), https://www.pewresearch.org.

[10] *IEEE CTU, "Digital Communication and Its Effects on Interpersonal Relationships,"* ctu.ieee.org (last visited Apr. 2025).

direct interaction, digital communication reshapes and extends it within a broader social context.

B. Increased Connectivity

We truly live in an information age in which many individuals are closely tied to digital devices and informational networks.[11] Separation from digital tools often results in experiences of anxiety or loss of orientation. The technologies that provide remarkable flexibility to how and when we communicate also provide multiple channels through which information may be transmitted simultaneously, making communication more immediate and versatile than ever before.

C. Facilitation of Long-Distance Relationships

One of the most direct effects of digital communication on interpersonal relationships is the facilitation of long-distance connections.[12] The idea of maintaining a high-quality long-distance relationship over an extended period, once considered unrealistic, has been normalised by digital communication tools. Video calls, instant messaging, and social media platforms have redefined the parameters of proximity in human relationships.

D. Negative Impacts of Digital Communication

Digital communication also has drawbacks that result in diminished quality of human interaction. Social networks, while enabling connectivity, often reduce complex human behaviour into thin transactional gestures such as "liking," a concept that risks losing meaning through overuse. A greater problem is the growing potential for digital communication to displace both face-to-face conversation and authentic listening.

E. Reduced Face-to-Face Interactions

Research and social observation have documented a marked reduction in the number of face-to-face interactions taking place within many contemporary societies.[13] This shift has led to a corresponding decline in conversational skills, as many individuals increasingly prefer to communicate electronically. The absence of physical proximity undermines the richness of human communication.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The digital divide is not merely a technological gap; it is a socio-legal phenomenon that perpetuates and deepens existing social inequalities. Lack of access to digital tools and literacy restricts participation in education, employment, and civic life, thereby functioning as a modern form of discrimination. Constitutional values of equality, dignity, and justice — enshrined in Articles 14, 15, 16, and 21 of the Constitution of India — demand that the State take affirmative steps to bridge this divide.

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[11] *Working Voices, "The Information Age and Communication Dependency,"* workingvoices.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

[12] *Working Voices, "Long-Distance Relationships and Digital Communication,"* workingvoices.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

[13] *The Times of India, "Decline of Face-to-Face Communication in the Digital Age,"* thetimesofindia.indiatimes.com (last visited Apr. 2025).

21. RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT

The fast growth of digital technology has completely changed the way personal information is made, kept, and passed around. Even though these changes have made communication and work more efficient, they have also led to big worries about keeping people's private information safe. This paper looks at how the right to privacy is changing in today's digital world by using ideas and theories. It looks at the latest laws, especially how privacy is mentioned in constitutions and how courts have explained it. The paper also looks at the conflicts between government spying, how companies handle data, and people's right to control their own information. By looking at what has been written and the laws that are in place, the study suggests a fair way to understand privacy as something that changes depending on the situation. The paper ends by saying that protecting privacy in the digital age needs laws that keep up with changes, better rules to control data, and more people knowing about their privacy rights.[1]

INTRODUCTION

Privacy used to mean the right of a person to be left alone. But in today's digital world, this idea is no longer enough. The use of the internet, smartphones, and technology that collects data has made it hard to tell where public life ends and private life begins. Every time someone uses social media, shops online, or sends messages, they leave behind data. This data can be gathered, studied, and possibly used in ways that aren't fair or safe. In India, recognizing privacy as a basic right was a big step in legal history. [2]As more people use digital tools and there are more cases of data leaks and monitoring, it's clear that privacy laws need to be reviewed and updated. This paper looks at how the idea of privacy has changed and how it can be understood in today's digital environment.

HYPOTHESIS

This study starts with the idea that privacy is more at risk today because of how much data is being collected by both governments and companies. Even though privacy is seen as a basic right, the laws in place aren't enough to protect people's information in a world that's very digital. The research also believes there's a big gap between what users agree to and how much real control they have over their data online. While courts have made privacy a key part of constitutional rights, this hasn't always led to real action or strong protection in practice. So, the study thinks that[3] new technology has moved faster than the laws, creating spaces where privacy isn't well protected in the digital world.

[1] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation), European Parliament and Council, 2016.

[2] Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India, (2017) 10 SCC 1 (India).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have been discussing for a long time what privacy really means and how far it should go. In the past, legal experts thought of privacy mainly in terms of stopping people from physically entering someone's space. But today, many scholars believe privacy is more than that. They argue it also includes the right to control personal information and make decisions about one's own data.A major court case called "Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India" changed how privacy is understood.[4]The court said privacy is a key part of the right to life and freedom. They listed privacy as including things like the body being respected, keeping personal information private, and having freedom in making choices.Around the world, laws like the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) have helped shape how people think about protecting their data.[5]Scholars have also looked at how technology companies affect privacy, saying that how these companies handle data can take away people's freedom.Even though a lot has been written on this topic, there is still a problem in connecting the basic ideas from the law with the changes happening because of new technology.[6]This paper tries to fill that gap by looking at it from a theoretical norm.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on three core theoretical concepts:

- **Informational Privacy:**
  Refers to an individual's right to control the collection, handling, storage, and sharing of personal information. It's increasingly significant in the digital age where actions leave digital traces, influencing what is known about a person and their preferences.
- **Autonomy and Dignity:**
  Privacy is linked to personal autonomy and dignity, allowing individuals the freedom to think and act without external pressure. Constant surveillance can inhibit this freedom, affecting legal perspectives on privacy.
- **Surveillance Theory:**
  Examines the implications of being monitored by governments and private entities for various purposes. The theory highlights power imbalances between data collectors and individuals whose information is tracked, affecting behaviors and undermining democratic values.[7]

Integration of Concepts: The interrelation of informational privacy, autonomy and dignity, and surveillance theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding privacy challenges in the digital landscape. It underscores the evolving nature of privacy as technology and power dynamics change.

METHODOLOGY (THEORETICAL APPROACH):

[3] Daniel J. Solove, Understanding Privacy (Harvard University Press, 2008).
[4] Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India, (2017) 10 SCC 1.
[5] GDPR, Regulation (EU) 2016/679.
[6] Anita L. Allen, Privacy Law and Society, 3rd ed. (2016); Daniel J. Solove, Understanding Privacy (2008).

This research adopts a “theoretical and doctrinal methodology”. It relies on:

- Analysis of constitutional provisions
- Examination of judicial decisions
- Review of academic literature and legal commentaries

No empirical data has been collected. Instead, the study uses “critical and comparative analysis” to evaluate existing theories and legal principles.

ANALYSIS

The idea of privacy as a basic human right shows a change from a limited to a more comprehensive view of personal freedoms. But the digital age brings new difficulties.

First, the amount of data being collected now is huge.Governments use digital tools to monitor people for safety, and companies gather user information to make money. This creates worries about whether people truly agree to it, whether they know what's happening, and whether those in charge are responsible.

Second, there's a big gap in power.People usually don't have the knowledge or tools to manage how their data is used. Privacy policies are often complicated and unclear, making it hard for people to give real consent.

Third, current laws are not keeping up with new technologies.Even though courts have widened the idea of privacy, the systems in place to enforce it are not strong enough.

So, privacy should be seen not as something absolute, but as a right that needs to be balanced with other important goals, like keeping the country safe and supporting economic growth.[8]

FINDINGS :

- The right to privacy is evolving in the context of the digital age, encompassing online behavior and digital data creation.
- There is a significant gap between the legal recognition of privacy as a basic right and its actual protection, with current enforcement mechanisms being inadequate against issues like data leaks and unauthorized information usage.
- Major companies wield considerable influence over privacy practices, often prioritizing profit over user privacy, leading to user confusion and lack of control over personal data.
- Having laws alone is insufficient for effective privacy protection; it requires robust technological measures such as encryption and responsible data handling guidelines.
- Privacy is not a static concept; it adapts to technological advancements, societal changes, and the structures of governments and organizations, necessitating continuous reevaluation and adjustment.

CONCLUSION

The right to privacy has become a key part of individual freedom in today's digital world. It's not just an idea found in laws anymore—it's something people actually need in a world where personal information is constantly being shared through technology. Even though it's a big step to recognize privacy as a basic right, it's not enough on its own to keep people safe in their daily lives.The fast growth of digital technology has brought up new problems that old legal systems are not always ready to deal with.Things like misuse of data, online spying, and people not knowing their rights show that privacy needs more than just written laws. It needs a bigger and more balanced effort that includes strong laws, good regulation, responsible use of technology, and better education about data rights for the public.In the

end, protecting privacy in the digital age isn't just about keeping people from being watched without permission.It's about giving individuals real control over their personal information and online presence. A system that can change and grow with technology is needed to make sure that progress helps human rights instead of hurting them, so privacy can still mean something in a world that's getting more connected every day.

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2. Samuel D. Warren & Louis D. Brandeis, "The Right to Privacy", 4 Harv. L. Rev. 193 (1890).
3. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council (General Data Protection Regulation).
4. Anita Allen, "Privacy Law and Society" (3rd ed. 2016).
5. Daniel J. Solove, "Understanding Privacy" (2008).

22. The Invisible Scars of Women Victims in India

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Abstract

Crimes targeting women remain a significant social and criminological issue in India, even with established constitutional safeguards and criminal legislation. Female victims often endure not only the immediate injury resulting from the crime but they also face victimization due to societal stigma, blame directed towards them, and insufficient institutional support. This research takes a victim-focused criminological viewpoint to explore how society and the State address offenses against women. It examines how underreporting and the denial of justice are caused by patriarchal beliefs, social silence, and the normalization of gender-based violence. The research also assesses the efficacy of State mechanisms like police action, legal proceedings, and support programs for victims in providing safety and recovery. Employing doctrinal and analytical approaches, the paper further extracts insights from Indian cinema as a socio-legal mirror of women's lived realities. This Research paper highlights the importance of a comprehensive strategy that merges legal changes, institutional awareness, and societal responsibility to realize significant victim justice.

Key words: Victim justice, Criminology, Societal stigma, Doctrinal Research, Society and state.

I .Introduction

In India, crimes against women continue to be one of the most intractable and difficult social concerns. Despite the constitutional protections for equality, dignity, and individual freedom granted by Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Indian Constitution, women continue to experience various forms of violence, including domestic abuse, sexual assault, harassment, trafficking, acid attacks, and cyber bullying. The systemic nature of gender-based violence is brought to light by the fact that these offenses impact women of all socioeconomic statuses, ages, and geographical locations. In India, crimes against women are more than just legal violations; they are complex social issues with roots in historical patriarchy. Despite a solid framework of constitutional protections and evolving criminal law, the "invisible scars" of female victims—including psychological trauma, social exclusion, and institutional neglect—still exist beneath the surface of legal statistics.

Crimes against women cannot be seen simply as isolated criminal actions from a criminological standpoint. They are firmly embedded in inequitable power relations, gender stereotypes, and patriarchal societal systems that support dominance over women's bodies and decisions. The criminal justice system, which is meant to be a protective device, frequently turns into another location where people are victimized. Secondary victimization is the result of insensitivity, moral judgment, procedural delays, and a lack of institutional help for female victims.

This study makes the case that justice for female victims requires a change in mindset, moving away from an offender-centred approach and toward a victim-centred one. In addition to

regulatory change, this strategy calls for societal responsibility, institutional awareness, and legal reform. This research seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of victim justice in crimes against women by combining criminological theory, legal analysis, Indian case law, forensic science, and cinematic portrayal.

II. Constitutional and Statutory Framework Governing Crimes Against Women

The essential rights of a person are directly related to their reproductive rights. Part III of the Indian Constitution protects these rights. Indian law contains a number of clauses that protect these basic rights and guarantee individual liberty and respect.

Article 14[1] which talks about right to equality before law and equal protection of the law within the territory of India.

Therefore, equal rights have been given to both men and women in taking their autonomous decision and nothing can be imposed on them by any other person, even they are free to take their reproductive decisions.

Article 15[2] which protects every individuals from any kind of discrimination on the ground of race, cast, religion, sex, place of birth or any of them.

This provision is also very well related to the protection of reproductive right of a women, because it protects the women form any kind of discrimination. And she is free to take her independent decision without any fear of gender biasness.

Article 21[3] which states that no person shall be deprives of his personal life and liberty. Every individual have their own choices and having liberty to make their own decisions, and no other person can deprive any person from enjoying this rights.

Similarly, every women has the right to make their own choices and are free to enjoy their rights given under the provision of reproductive rights.

S. 124 of BNS[4] Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid, etc.

It addresses deliberate cause of serious harm. It penalizes someone who wilfully causes severe physical harm on another person, such as permanent harm, limb loss, or injuries compromising life.

S. 125 of BNS[5] Act endangering life or personal safety of others.

It addresses the deliberate use of dangerous weapons or methods to cause serious injury. It is applicable when fire, chemicals, guns, or any other hazardous approach are utilized to cause serious harm.

S. 85 of BNS[6] Husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty.

According to Section 85, an act carried out with someone's free consent is not offence as long as the person giving the consent is of legal age and the conduct is not intended to cause death or serious injury.

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[1] INDIA CONST. art. 14, amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

[2] INDIA CONST. art. 15, amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

[3] INDIA CONST. art. 21, amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

[4] BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA. S.124, 2023.

[5] BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA. S.125, 2023.

[6] BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA. S.85, 2023.

S. 86 of BNS[7] Cruelty defined.
According to Section 86, as long as there is no purpose to cause death, an act carried out in good faith for the benefit of a person with that person's agreement is not an offence, even if it causes harm.
S.48 of BSA [8] Evidence of character or previous sexual experience not relevant in certain cases.
It focuses on maintaining the victim's dignity in cases of sexual assault. According to it, evidence of consent cannot be based on the victim's nature or prior sexual encounters. It is primarily useful in circumstances like rape, where the defendant is unable to mitigate the situation by blaming the victim's history.
S.120 of BSA [9] Presumption as to absence of consent in certain prosecution for rape
It addresses the assumption that the victim did not give consent in specific instances of sexual assault. When the court determines that sexual intercourse occurred and the victim claims that she did not give her agreement, the court will presume that there was no consent, according to the law. The accused must provide proof of consent in rape trials, which is where it is mostly utilized.
S.184 of BNSS[10] - Medical examination of the victim of rape
The medical evaluation of a rape victim to gather evidence is covered. It mandates that a licensed medical professional examine the victim with her agreement (or the guardian's consent if the victim is a minor) and write a report. It may be used in rape/sexual offense cases to back up the inquiry with medical evidence.

III. Victim-Centric Criminology and the Evolution of Victim Justice

Victim-centric criminology places a strong emphasis on seeing victims as key participants in the criminal justice system. In the past, traditional criminal justice systems have prioritized the identification of criminals and the imposition of punishment, frequently ignoring the victims' social, psychological, and emotional requirements. By emphasizing the rights, experiences, and vulnerabilities of victims, victimology—a part of criminology—challenges this difference.
A victim-centric approach to crimes against women requires trauma sensitivity, privacy, protection from intimidation, and access to support services like compensation, counselling, and legal assistance. In India, 445,256 cases were recorded by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2023, a 4% increase from 2022. NGOs such as the National Commission for Women (NCW) estimate underreporting to be 90%. It shows that victims are frequently scared from reporting crimes or seeking justice when such safeguards are not implemented. Furthermore, social exposure, hostile cross-examination, and frequent questioning may increase trauma and compromise the goal of justice.

International human rights standards that prioritize the dignity, involvement, and compensation of victims of violence are also consistent with a victim-centric approach. Although implementation is still uneven, this approach is progressively becoming recognized in the Indian context due to judicial decisions and legislative changes. In BNSS they have a provision which is related to Victim compensation. **S.396 of BNSS Victim Compensation scheme.**
It offers compensation to victims or their dependents who have experienced loss or harm as a result of a crime, particularly in situations where the offender cannot be located or recognized, or when the court ordered compensation is insufficient.

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[7] BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA. S.86, 2023.

[8] BHARATIYA SAKSHYA ADHINIYAM, S.48, 2023.

[9] BHARATIYA SAKSHYA ADHINIYAM, S.120, 2023.

[10] BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA, S.184, 2023.

IV. Secondary Victimization and Social Role

Both the frequency of crimes against women and the reaction to such crimes are significantly influenced by society. Gender stereotypes and patriarchal standards frequently justify violence against women and place the responsibility on the victims. Social conversation is often dominated by questions about a woman's behaviour, character, attire, or past relationships, which detracts from the offender's guilt.

Victim blame and social shame contribute greatly to underreporting of crimes. Families frequently put pressure on women to be quiet or make concessions in order to protect their honour and social standing. This culture of silence encourages criminal behaviour and feeds violent cycles. Thus, in addition to institutions, cultural attitudes that denigrate women's experiences also contribute to secondary victimization.

The difference between public opinion and legal recognition of women's rights causes the research problem. Although women's bodily autonomy and dignity are protected by statutes and the constitution their implementation is weakened by social criticism. Social pressure to withdraw complaints, resolve conflicts privately, or avoid litigation demonstrates a systemic failure to integrate gender equity at the grassroots level. Underreporting arises from these factors: a 2021 NFHS-5 survey indicated 30% of women aged 18-49 experienced domestic violence but only 14% reported it. Families are silenced by stigma, which puts "family honour" ahead of justice.

The goal of protective laws is undermined when survivors experience denial or silence at the community level, making their access to legal remedies theoretical rather than practical.

V. The Role of the State and Institutional Responses

The state has a moral and constitutional duty to protect women and provide their access to the legal system. Gender-based crimes are acknowledged by laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013, and modifications to the Indian Penal Code. However, how well these rules are implemented will determine how effective they are.

Police departments often serve as victims' first point of contact, but there is still a lot of insensitivity, a lack of gender-sensitive training, and a reluctance to file formal complaints.

Stereotyping, direct processes, and judicial delays isolate victims from the legal system. Despite the existence of victim compensation plans and assistance programs, their accessibility is restricted by bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of understanding.

Law enforcement organizations, forensic facilities, courts, and social welfare departments must work together to implement a victim-centric state response. Institutional sensitivity and responsibility are required to translate legislative safeguards into genuine protection for women victims.

The experiences of victims are also significantly shaped by judicial institutions. Survivors may experience retraumatization as a result of prolonged trials, many adjournments, and aggressive interrogation. Despite the introduction of special courts and in-camera trials for specific types of offenses, their effectiveness is limited by their uneven application. The absence of continual monitoring methods further permits institutional inefficiencies to endure.

The state is also accountable for long-term assistance and rehabilitation. There is still regional disparity in access to legal aid, counselling, shelter homes, and economic rehabilitation. Victims may be compelled to return to dangerous situations or give up on legal actions entirely

in the absence of consistent institutional support. This reflects a mismatch between formal legal protection and lived realities. To stop secondary victimization and preserve the constitutional guarantee of equality, dignity, and individual liberty, institutional responses must be strengthened.

VI. Forensic Science and Digital Investigation in Gender-Based Crimes

In the investigation and prosecution of crimes against women, the integration of digital forensics and forensic science is increasing in their significance. By lowering the dependence on oral testimony alone, scientific tools like DNA profiling, forensic pathology, cyber forensics, call detail record analysis, CCTV footage, and electronic evidence are essential to strengthening victim-centric justice.

In sexual assaults, DNA evidence has emerged as a significant tool in confirming the identity of the offender and corroborating the victim's statement. Proper collection, preservation, and interpretation of forensic evidence boost conviction rates and shield victims from hostile cross-examination and character assassination. In a similar vein, quick and delicate forensic medical evaluations can assist record psychological and physical trauma without causing additional harm.

Cyber forensics has become crucial as technology-enabled crimes including cyberstalking, online harassment, revenge pornography, and digital abuse have become more common. Social media accounts, electronic correspondence, metadata, and IP addresses are examples of digital footprints that help detectives track down criminals and verify victim allegations. Effective digital inquiry is nevertheless hampered by issues like a lack of technological know-how, a delay in gathering evidence, and poor infrastructure. Trained staff, consistent procedures, and collaboration between forensic specialists, investigating police, and judicial authorities are all necessary for a victim-centric forensic strategy. When used properly, forensic and digital investigation technologies improve the validity of the evidence and rebuild victims' trust in the legal system.

Forensic science, which includes toxicology, serology, and medical examinations (Section 164A CrPC), relates tangible evidence to convictions in rape and gender-based assault cases. Tampering hazards have been shown in Kathua (2018), where switched vaginal samples resulted in 542-day delays and acquittals. Although the Directorate of Forensic Science Services' guidelines stress 24-hour collecting, access is restricted by the lack of rural FSLs (there are only 7 CFSLs nationwide). To avoid subsequent trauma, victim-centred reforms must give qualified medico-forensic teams top priority.

VII. Judicial Approaches to Victim-Centric Justice

- **The Nirbhaya case (Mukesh & Anr. vs. State for NCT of Delhi, 2017.[11]**

  A 23-year-old physiotherapy intern was brutally raped and murdered by a gang on a moving bus in Delhi in 2012. After receiving treatment for 13 days, the intern died from severe injuries. As a "rarest of rare" case, the Supreme Court declared the death sentences for four adult offenders in 2017 because of the savagery that "shocked the collective conscience," prioritizing victim dignity over the criminal focus. This case is relevant to this study because it emphasizes several important themes covered in the

[11] The Nirbhaya case (Mukesh & Anr. vs. State for NCT of Delhi, 2017, 6 SCC 1.

research, including the extreme physical and psychological trauma suffered by victims, the significance of forensic and medical evidence in obtaining a conviction, and the necessity of a victim-centric approach and a more effective institutional response in crimes against women.

- **Laxmi v. Union of India (2014)[12]**

  The Supreme Court addressed deficiencies in the IPC for acid violence in this Public Interest Litigation (PIL), which was filed by Laxmi Agarwal, a survivor of an acid attack that left her blind and disfigured in 2002. It mandated a ₹3 lakh minimum compensation through victim schemes (BNSS S.396), restricted acid sales as "poison" to avoid easy access, and directed amendments to classify acid assaults under serious pain (currently BNS S.124). By putting rehabilitation, health care, and offender accountability first, the ruling diminishes the institutional negligence mentioned in the article and fights secondary victimization. This case is relevant to the current study because it emphasizes three key themes covered in the research: the significance of victim-centric justice, the State's obligation to provide protection and rehabilitation, and the long-term physical and psychological trauma experienced by female victims.

- **State of Punjab v. Gurmit Singh[13]**

  A landmark Supreme Court decision that addressed secondary trauma from hostile cross-examinations and stigma and emphasized victim-centric procedures in rape prosecutions. Three men, including Gurmit Singh, kidnapped and gang-raped a young girl. They drawn her into a car, beat her for hours at a tubewell, and then left her behind. The trial court cleared the girl because of "inconsistencies" in her testimony and delays in her medical care. Society frequently engages in victim-blaming in sexual assault cases by casting doubt on the woman's behaviour or presence at a specific location or moment. The Supreme Court disagreed, ruling that in order to preserve the victim's dignity and privacy, rape trials must take place in camera. The Court made it clear that a woman's actions or past behaviour does not infer consent and that the criminal justice system must put the victim's dignity ahead of societal prejudice or public curiosity.

- **In Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra (1979) [Mathura case][14]**

  Mathura, a young tribal girl was raped by Police officers inside a police station. The accused was found not guilty by the Supreme Court, which concluded that the act seems to be consensual and that there were no obvious indications of resistance. The strong patriarchal presumptions in the criminal court system were made clear by the Mathura case. The ruling sparked intense public outrage and criticism, which eventually led to significant modifications to India's rape laws, including adjustments to the burden of proof and evidentiary standards. Because it highlights the issues of victim blaming, secondary victimization, and institutional insensitivity—all of which are major topics covered in this research—this case is related to the current study. It also emphasizes the need for victim-centric legal reforms and more effective protection of women's dignity.

[12] Laxmi v. Union of India (2014), 4 SCC 427.

[13] State of Punjab v. Gurmit Singh, 2 SCC 384.

[14] In Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra ,(1979), 1979 AIR 185, 1979 SCR (1) 810.

- **Shafin Jahan v. Ashokan K.M. (2018)[15]**

  In the Hadiya case, society called the woman's decision "love jihad" and believed she had been manipulated into marrying and converting against her parents' desires. The Supreme Court, however, adamantly maintained that an adult woman has total control over her life decisions. The Court ruled that under Article 21 of the Constitution, issues related to marriage, religion, and interpersonal relationships are covered by personal liberty. It clearly stated that a woman's constitutional rights cannot be overridden by societal disapproval and that she is not the property of her parents or society. This case is directly related to the current study because it emphasizes the significance of women's dignity, bodily autonomy, and personal choice—all crucial components of victim-centric justice.

- **Bilkis Bano v. State of Gujarat (2008)[16]**

  The case started during the Gujarat riots in 2002, when several members of Bilkis Bano's family were killed and she was gang-raped while pregnant. The Supreme Court moved the trial from Gujarat to Maharashtra because of safety and fairness concerns. The Court underlined the State's obligation to guarantee a fair investigation, witness safety, and justice for victims of sexual abuse and communal crimes after an investigation and trial resulted in the conviction of many accused. In this case, the victim's reliability was originally questioned by society and the system, which also made an effort to cover up the crime. The victim received justice, accountability, and compensation as a result of the Supreme Court's forceful intervention. The Court stated clearly that a victim's history, actions, or social identity had no influence on the process of justice. The infringement of victim rights is what counts. The judiciary must support female victims even when society fails them, as this case reaffirmed.

  This case, highlights the extreme physical, psychological, and social trauma that female victims endure as well as the difficulties they encounter in getting justice, such as threats, displacement, and institutional failures, significance of victim protection, impartial investigations, and the judiciary's role in upholding justice and dignity, all of which directly related to the research of victim-centric criminology, secondary victimization, and institutional accountability.

VIII. Cinema as a Socio-Legal Lens on Victimization

The realities of gender-based violence and the lived experiences of female victims are reflected in Indian cinema, which is a major sociocultural media. Beyond just being entertaining, movies frequently draw attention to the gap between social norms and legal protections, which enhances victimological and criminological viewpoints. Cinema emphasizes the necessity of a victim-centric approach to justice by showing sexual assault, domestic abuse, and institutional failure.

Instead than using physical attack, **The Great Indian Kitchen (2021)** depicts marital abuse through everyday patriarchy. The movie reveals how emotional neglect, unpaid household work, and denying one's own autonomy inside a marriage constitute psychological and financial abuse. Secondary victimization and silence result from the normalization and dismissal of such pain as a part of marital adjustment. In addition to reflecting the goals of the

[15] Shafin Jahan v. Ashokan K.M., (2018), AIRONLINE 2018 SC 1136.

[16] Bilkis Bano v. State of Gujarat, (2008), 2024 INSC 24.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and the constitutional guarantee of dignity under Article 21, this story connects with victim-centric criminology.

The movie **Pink (2016**) critically examines moral policing and victim-blaming in sexual assault cases. The movie respects legislative protections that protect survivors' dignity and avoid secondary victimization during judicial proceedings by highlighting consent and rejecting judgments based on a woman's character or past.

Despite focusing on custodial violence**, Jai Bhim (2021)** emphasizes institutional insensitivity, power abuse, and forensic process manipulation. These illustrate how victim justice and confidence in the criminal justice system are compromised by investigative shortcomings and a lack of accountability.

In conclusion, Indian cinema highlights the invisible aspects of violence that frequently stay outside of legal statistics and humanizes the experiences of female victims. The demand for a victim-centric criminal justice system that places more value on respect, assistance, and meaningful justice than merely punishing offenders is reinforced by films that depict psychological trauma, societal stigma, and institutional failure.

IX. Structural and Social Barriers to Victim Justice

Victim justice in crimes against women is always delayed by a number of issues, notwithstanding progressive legislation and court interventions. These include underreporting of crimes, procedural delays, lack of coordination among authorities, and persisting social stigma. Victims often endure emotional exhaustion, financial restraints, and social isolation, resulting to withdrawal from the legal process. Victims are made more isolated by the lack of proper counselling services, legal aid, and rehabilitation facilities. In order to address these issues, institutions and society as a whole must adopt new attitudes in addition to structural adjustments.

Inconsistent implementation of protective legislation, a lack of knowledge about legal rights, and unequal access to court systems—especially in rural and vulnerable communities—all complicate victim justice. People frequently lose faith in the legal system as a result of ineffective oversight and follow-up by official authorities. In order to overcome these obstacles, institutional responsibility must be strengthened and victims must receive ongoing assistance during the legal process.

X. Recommendations for Strengthening Victim-Centric Justice

- Strengthening the enforcement and observation of existing laws.
- Police and judges should be required to receive trauma-informed and gender-sensitive training.
- Improving legal assistance, counselling, and rehabilitation programs for victims.
- Raising public awareness regarding victim blaming through media and education.
- Including training in digital and forensic investigations at police institutions.
- Tech Upgrades: AI for deepfake forensics; required NCRP integration for real-time cyber evidence.
- Policy Fusion: Modify BNS for victim audits based on criminology and mixed offense courts.

XI. Conclusion

In India, crimes against women are not just legal violations; they are also expressions of systemic injustices, administrative shortcomings, and deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes. This study examines the "invisible scars" of victimization are psychological trauma, social

exclusion, and constant institutional neglect, all of which have been shown to cause harm to women victims that goes well beyond physical harm. Despite the existence of progressive statutory protections under the BNS, BNSS, and BSA as well as constitutional guarantees under Articles 14, 15, and 21, victims' lived realities still show a significant gap between the idea of the law and the reality of justice.

This study uses a victim-centric criminological approach to make the case that crimes against women is not sufficiently addressed by an offender-focused justice system. Reporting is frequently discouraged and trust in the criminal justice system is weakened by secondary victimization brought through victim-blaming, insensitive police, unfriendly courtroom procedures, and social shame. In addition to highlighting the ongoing flaws in institutional response, judicial interventions in cases like Nirbhaya, Laxmi v. Union of India, Gurmit Singh, Bilkis Bano, and Shafin Jahan demonstrate the judiciary's growing dedication to victim autonomy, dignity, and rehabilitation.

By reducing the dependence on oral testimony, reducing character assassination, and boosting evidentiary credibility, the study also demonstrates the critical role that forensic science and digital investigation play in boosting victim justice. However, their potential is still constrained by unequal implementation, a lack of educated workers, and inadequate infrastructure. In the same way, Indian cinema serves as a socio-legal mirror, humanizing the experiences of victims and exposing the covert, accepted forms of violence that are not reflected in official statistics.

In conclusion, this study finds that legal reform by alone is insufficient to bring about real justice for women victims. It requires a comprehensive change that incorporates institutional procedures influenced by trauma, legal protections, scientific research, and social responsibility. The criminal justice system cannot advance beyond symbolic justice and guarantee substantive equality until it places a higher priority on the involvement, rehabilitation, protection, and dignity of victims in addition to punishing offenders. Therefore, in order to achieve India's constitutional promise of dignity, liberty, and justice for women, a truly victim-centric framework is not optional—rather, it is necessary.

23. THE ROLE OF THE JUDICIARY IN PROTECTING MIGRANT WOMEN LABORERS

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ABSTRACT

Migrant women workers in India encounter a myriad of challenges in securing labor rights and judicial protections, stemming from the intertwined issues of migration, gender, and informal employment. The ineffective enforcement of labor laws, coupled with inadequate funding for regulatory agencies and inconsistent policy implementation at the state level, severely undermines the labor protections available to these individuals. Additionally, the lack of legal assistance and language barriers further obstrct migrant women from navigating the judicial system, as many legal processes remain inaccessible to those not proficient in the local language. Although Public Interest Litigations (PILs) serve to spotlight social injustices, they often provide only temporary solutions and do not tackle the underlying factors of labor exploitation, such as poverty, limited education, and economic vulnerability that compel women into unstable job situations. Many of these women are unaware of their legal rights and faceintimidation from employers, which deters them from pursuing justice. Cultural biases and social stigma exacerbate the situation, as migrant women may fear that voicing labor concerns could harm their social reputation or expose them to discrimination. This absence of legal and social support perpetuates a cycle of reliance on exploitative employment, further complicated by disjointed labor policies that offer uneven protections. To effectively address these complex issues, a holistic strategy is require, encompassing consistent and culturally attuned legal aid, a unified labor policy framework, and strong support systems that empower migrant women to assert their rights. Implementing such reforms would foster a more just labor environment, ensuring that migrant women workers in India receive the protections and dignity they rightfully deserve.

INTRODUCTION

Migrant women laborers in India encounter a range of complex challenges stemming from their unique position at the crossroads of migration, gender, and informal employment. Many are compelled to migrate from rural areas to urban centers or across state borders due to poverty,

textiles, where they are particularly susceptibe to various forms of exploitation, including gender discrimination, workplace hazards, and sexual harassment. Although India has enacted progressive labor legislation, such as the Code on Wages (2019) and the Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code (2020), the enforcement of these laws is inadequate. A significant number of migrant women laborers do not benefit from formal labor protections, social security, or effective grievance mechanisms. The informal nature of their work often exludes them from legal safeguards, exacerbating their marginalization. Judicial actions have been crucial in advocating for and protecting the rights of these women. Landmark rulings, such as Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997), established essential guidelines to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, reinforcing women's constitutional rights to equality and dignity. The Supreme Court has also intervened to support marginalized women workers, as demonstrated in cases like Sunita Devi v. State of Biar, which mandated the government to ensure access to vital services for women migrants, including healthcare and education. These

judicial efforts highlight a commitment to enhancing legal protections for laborers facing

discrimination and exploitation. Nonetheless, systemic obstacles persist. The implementation of labor reforms has faced criticism for favoring economic liberalization over the welfare of workers, facilitating the exploitation of vulnerable groups, including migrant women. Additionally coordination challenges between central and state governments pose significant hurdles for migrants, further complicating their situation.

HISTORY

Migration in India is characterized by a multifaceted history influenced by colonialism, economic demands, and urban growth. During the British colonial era, numerous Indian laborers were compelled into indentured servitude on British plantations in locations such as the Caribbean, Mauritius, and Fiji. These individuals, mainly from rural backgrounds, were lured by promises of economic advancement but faced severe exploitation and difficult working environments. Concurrently, there was a notable internalmigration trend within India, as laborers flocked to urban areas and industrial hubs like Bombay and Calcutta, motivated by the demand for inexpensive labor in various sectors including factories, mines, and plantations. Following independence, internal migration surged due to urbanization and industrial expansion, with many individuals relocating to cities for employment in fields such as construction, textiles, and domestic work. Women increasingly became integral to these informal labor markets, yetthey often remained unregistered and outside the scope of labor protections, resulting in vulnerable working conditions. The introduction of the *Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979* aimed to protect migrant workers by ensuring improved wages and working conditions. Additional legislation, such as the *Minimum Wages Act, 1948[1]* and the *Maternity Benefit Act[2], 1961*, provides further safeguards, although enforcement is frequently inadequate. The lack o visibility for informal laborers in official records and the shortcomings in labor policy implementation continue to leave migrant workers, particularly women, susceptible to exploitation. Migration also presents social and political challenges, including competition for resources and services in urban settings, while simultaneously fostering economic growth through enhanced labor participation and cultural diversity. Effective governance of migration is essential to tackle these issues, improve livin conditions, and facilitate the integration of migrants into society.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative methodology, concentrating on the examination of judicial rulings, pertinent legislation, policy frameworks, governmental reports, and scholarly literature to evaluate the legal safeguards afforded to migrant laborers. A comparative analysis is performed with Bangladesh's Overseas Employment and Migrants Act of 2013 and the Philippines' Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act, aiming to uncover best practices and derive insights for enhancing welfare policies in Inda. The study rigorously assesses the efficacy of Indian labor legislation, particularly the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act of 1979, and reviews judicial actions, including significant cases such as *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India* (1984)[3], which tackle issues of labor exploitation and human rights responsibilities. Additionally, it investigates governmental initiatives aimed at the welfare of migrant laborers and the role of institutions in advocating for their rights. The research underscoresthe importance of adhering to international labor standards, including the conventions established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) that protect migrant workers' rights. By pinpointing deficiencies in the current legal framework and examining

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1 https://migrationnetwork.un.org/resources/principles-role-judges-and-lawyers-relation-refugees-and-migrants

2 https://indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/1681?view_type=search

3 1984 AIR 802 1984 SCR (2) 67 1984 SCC (3) 161 1983

innovative policies from other countries, the study seeks to offer policy recommendations for India. The outcomes are designed to enhance protections, foster sustainable migration policies, and create a fair and inclusive environment for migrant worker.

JUDICIARY'S ROLE: KEY CASE LAWS AND CHALLENGES

The judiciary has played a crucial role in the development of labor rights, particularly through landmark rulings that address the challenges faced by migrant workers, including women. Nonetheless, issues with enforcement persist, largely due to a lack of coordination between state agencies and local authorities. A detailed examination of significant case law pertinent to this matter follows.

1. The case of Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India (1984)[4] addressed the plight of forced and bonded laborers ubjected to exploitative conditions. The Supreme Court asserted that the right to life under Article 21 encompasses the right to live with dignity, thereby reinforcing the government's obligation to identify and rehabilitate bonded laborers in accordance with the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, highlighting the state's responsibility in upholding these protections.

2. In Salal Hydro Project v. State of Jammu and Kashmir (1983)[5], the Court recognized the vulnerable status of migrant laborers ecruited through informal channels. It underscored the necessity for state governments to ensure the welfare and safety of these workers, a challenge that remains relevant today as informal recruitment practices persist.

3. Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)[6], while primarily focused on sexual harassment, established essential guidelines for safeguarding women's safety in informal sectors, including workplaces with a considerable migrant workforce. This case laid the groundwork for protecting women's dignity in both formal and informal work environments.

   In the case of National Campaign Committee for Construction Labourers . Union of India (2018)[7], the Supreme Court acknowledged the difficulties faced by construction workers, predominantly migrants, and instructed states to efficiently allocate welfare funds for the benefit of these laborers.

These rulings underscore the judiciary's active role; however, migrant women still encounter significant obstacles, including insufficient documentation, language difficulties, and limited access to legal assistance.

ANALYSIS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

A detailed examination of migrant laborer protections in various countries reveals significant initiatives aimed at safeguarding their rights. In the Philippines, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) offers crucial benefits, including disability assistance and life insurance for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), thereby promoting their financial security. Furthermore, mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars inform workers about their rights and the legal systems of host nations, while he OWWA's Repatriation Program provides support for OFWs in emergencies, ensuring their safe return. The government also oversees recruitment agencies to prevent illegal activities and human trafficking.In Bangladesh, .

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4 1984 AIR 802 1984 SCR (2) 67 1984 SCC (3) 161 1983

5 1984(1)SCALE680, (1984)3SCC538, AIRONLINE 1984 SC 24

6 AIR 1997 SUPREME COURT 3011, 1997 AIR SCW 3043, 1997 LAB. I. C

7 AIR 2018 SC (SUPP) 299, 2018 (5) SCC 607, (2018) 2 LAB LN 1, (2018) 4 SCALE 600, (2018) 4 KANT LJ 265,
(2018) 3 BOM CR 347, (2018) 1 SERVLJ 354, (2018) 2 ESC 193, (2018) 157 FACLR 489, 2018 (2) KLT SN 19 (SC),
2018 (7) ADJ 24 NOC, AIRONLINE 2018 SC 819

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment offers specialized health services, including reproductive and mental health care for migrant workers. Additionally, the "Migrant Workers' Welfare Fund" provides financial aid and legal assistance to those in need. The governent collaborates with NGOs and international bodies to enhance awareness of trafficking risks and promote safe migration practices. Thailand's approach to managing migrant workers includes provisions for obtaining work permits, ensuring their legal status and access to essential benefits such as healthcare and social security. The establishment of one-stop service centers offers migrant workers legal support, health services, and vocational training, facilitating their integration into the local labor mrket. Public health initiatives ensure that undocumented workers can access necessary healthcare services, reinforcing the notion that healthcare is a fundamental right regardless of legal status. Additionally, Thailand collaborates with international organizations to implement capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing support for migrant workers.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR MIGRANT FOR WOMEN WORKERS

Migrant workers including women have not been left behind in the government initiatives on plights of migrants including their domestic helpers. Key among these measures include The Government of India has launched a host of protective and preventive initiatives aimed at assisting migrant labourers, most of whom are vulnerable. Some key measures are:

1. Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 This act provides for the proper remuneration for all inter-stat migrant workers and defines their work hours and access to basic needs that include housing, health care, and travel allowance.
2. Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008 This act lays down a legal blueprint for welfare measures such as life insurance and health care as well as pension of old age exclusively targeting the workers from the unorganized sectors, a place where the majority of migrant women find employment.
3. National Health Insurance Scheme (Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana) This scheme povides health insurance against hospitalization and medical treatment costs to unorganized workers depending on female laborers' healthcare requirements particularly aid.
4. One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) This scheme enables migrant workers to avail of ration benefits in all the states and ensures that these people are not starve when there are to move to other places for employment.
5. Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan This was one of the promises made during this covid 19 period for the special migrant laborrs impacted introducing new provisions for the migrants' welfare
6. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan Dhan Scheme (PMSYM) This scheme provides low pension coverage for women workers in the unorganized sector with a potential dispersal of PMSYM.
7. The Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act, 1996 This act makes it compulsory for around migrant construction workers to be registered and contained under welfare provisions such as accident insurance, health, and housing.
8. Toll free helplines and Portals for Migrant Workers The Government of India has establishd helplines and online portals for people to lodge complaints and seek redress in relation to any employment issue affecting migrants.

9. Skill Development Initiatives and Recruitment Portals Program like Skill India aim at reskilling the Indian migrants to enable them to take up productive formal work with an improved occupational and social status.

10. Maternity Benefits The Maternity Benefit Act was revised to provide protection to pregnant migrant women who are eligible for maternity leave and maernity health access, which enhance the welfare of the women during pregnancy and the period after childbirth.

SUGGESTION

A comprehensive elaboration on each point includes specific strategies and considerations.

1. Enhancing the enforcement of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act necessitates the implementation of regular inspections and audits to ensure employers comply with labor laws, particularly regarding fair wages and safe working conditions. This can be achieved by training labor inspectors to effectively identify and address violations. Additionally, establishing penalties for non-compliance alongside reward systms for compliant employers can foster a culture of accountability. Furthermore, creating a centralized database accessible to all states will enable better tracking of migrant workers' employment status and working conditions, thereby improving inter-governmental coordination.

2. The establishment of welfare boards for migrants should prioritize targeted programs for women, offering tailored support services such as counseling and job placement, while ensuring their representation in decision-making prcesses. It is also essential to develop emergency relief mechanisms with quick-response protocols to assist migrant workers during crises, such as natural disasters or pandemics. Collaborating with local governments will enhance the effectiveness of these welfare boards in reaching and supporting migrant communities.

3. Awareness initiatives for migrant women laborers must include community outreach programs that conduct workshops and seminars in local languages to inform women about their rights and avilable resources. The development of mobile applications and helplines will provide migrant workers with easy access to information regarding their rights and legal support. Additionally, fostering partnerships with NGOs that specialize in women's rights can facilitate training sessions for judicial personnel, ensuring they are well-equipped to address the needs of migrant women.

4. The implementation of customized labor policies for female workers is essential. This includes the requirement for indutries with a substantial female workforce to provide onsite childcare facilities, facilitating a balance between professional and family obligations. Additionally, mandatory training on reproductive health and workplace safety should be instituted to cater to the unique needs of women in the labor force. Employers should also be encouraged to offer flexible working hours and remote work options to better accommodate women's domestic roles.

5. Establishing specialized fast-track courts for labor disputesis crucial for efficient resolution. This involves creating streamlined procedures for filing complaints and appeals to reduce bureaucratic delays. It is also important to raise awareness among workers about these courts through outreach initiatives, ensuring they can easily access legal recourse. Furthermore, judges should receive specialized training in labor laws and the rights of migrant workers to improve their understanding and expedite the handling of cases.

6. Ensuring universal healthcare acces for migrant laborers is vital for their well-being. This can be achieved by deploying mobile health units staffed with qualified professionals to provide essential services, vaccinations, and health education in remote areas. Healthcare

services should be integrated with other social services, such as housing and employment support, to create a comprehensive approach to migrant welfare. Additionally, mental health programs tailored to address the specific stressors faced by migrant workers should be deeloped, offering counseling and support groups in easily accessible locations.

7. These initiatives aim to establish a robust framework that safeguards the rights of migrant workers, particularly women, while enhancing their overall well-being and facilitating their integration into society.

ADVANTAGES

The revised content emphasizes the benefits of judicial interventions in safeguarding individual rights and addressing societal issues.

1. Judicial actions play a crucial role in protecting fundamental rights, particularly for workers and vulnerable populations, by ensuring access to essential services, fair treatment, and protection against exploitation. Courts serve as a critical check on constitutional rights violations when other governmental branches are unresponsive.
2. In instances where legisation or executive actions fall short, the judiciary steps in to address these deficiencies, mandating necessary measures such as healthcare, housing, and workplace safety for marginalized communities.
3. Public Interest Litigations (PILs) offer a means for individuals, especially those unable to pursue legal action independently, to raise public concerns. Through judicial engagement, pressing social issues like labor rights, housing, and food access are prioritized, providing relief to affected group.
4. Judicial rulings foster gender-sensitive policies by promoting equality and advocating for safe work environments, thereby encouraging the development of initiatives that enhance conditions for women across various labor sectors, including informal and migrant work.
5. Judicial mandates exert moral pressure on governments to address labor and welfare challenges promptly. By exposing systemic issues, courts often drive authorities to implement reforms and enhance policy measures for at-risk popultions.
6. The judiciary functions as a vital check on the powers of the executive and legislative branches, ensuring accountability and preventing overreach. It acts as a protector of rights and freedoms, particularly for marginalized communities adversely affected by governmental actions.
7. The advancement of social justice jurisprudence is evident as courts advocate for equality, fairness, and welfare in their decisions. Judicial actions are instrumental in safeguarding the rights of marginalize groups, ensuring they are not deprived of access to economic and social benefits.
8. In times of crisis, courts are vital in providing immediate relief, such as preventing evictions, securing unpaid wages, and guaranteeing access to essential services for those in distress. This timely intervention is crucial for supporting vulnerable communities.
9. The promotion of accountability is achieved through judicial oversight, which fosters transparency and compels public authorities to act with responsibilty. This scrutiny is essential in mitigating negligence and corruption, particularly concerning labor rights and social welfare initiatives.
10. Courts enhance the empowerment of civil society by recognizing the contributions of

NGOs and activists through supportive rulings. This recognition bolsters grassroots movements and advocacy efforts aimed at advancing labor and social rights.

DISADVANTAGES

Migrant women laborers encounter significant challenges regarding judicial protection and labor rights, primarily due to several systemic issues.

1. The enforcement of judicial orders is often hampered by the inadequacies of executive agencies, which are frequently underfunded, understaffed, and prone to corruption. This resource deficiency undermines their ability to uphold labor laws, leaving migrant women susceptible to continued exploitation. Moreover, the fear of retaliation from employers discourges workers from reporting violations, further complicating their access to legal recourse.

2. Although public interest litigations (PILs) serve as an important mechanism for addressing social injustices, they cannot substitute for the essential need for comprehensive policy reforms. An overreliance on judicial activism risks overshadowing the legislative efforts required to develop sustainable solutions to labor rights challenges. Additionally, PILs may provide only temporary fixes that fail to tackl the underlying issues of poverty and lack of education that contribute to labor exploitation.

3. The inconsistent implementation of court orders by state governments leads to significant disparities in labor protections across regions. Variations in the interpretation of labor laws by different states can result in uneven enforcement influenced by local political dynamics. Furthermore, the lack of coordination between state and local authorities complicates the effective enforcement of labor rights.

4. The absence of specialized labor courts within the general judicial system limits the ability to address complex labor issues efficiently. Without dedicated fast-track courts for labor disputes, workers often endure prolonged legal proceedings, exacerbating their suffering and vulnerability. Consequently, critical labor rights cases may not receive the necessary attention and resources, further hindering the pursuit of justice for those affected.

5. Language barriers significantly impede migrant wmen laborers from comprehending legal processes and their rights. Legal documents and court procedures are predominantly available in the local language, which marginalizes non-native speakers. The absence of interpreters or translators exacerbates their challenges in engaging effectively with the judicial system.

6. A considerable number of migrant workers, especially women, possess a limited understanding of their legal rights and protections. This ignorance inhibits their ability to address exploitaton, as they may be unaware of their entitlement to seek justice. Misleading information from employers regarding workers' rights can further entrench exploitation, while the lack of outreach initiatives aimed at migrant laborers restricts their awareness of available legal options.

7. There is often a deficiency in legal aid services and support organizations tailored to the specific needs of migrant women laborers. Many regions lack legal aid clinics or organizations that address their unique challengs, making it difficult for these workers to obtain affordable legal representation. Existing support services may be overwhelmed, resulting in inadequate assistance for those who require help.

8. Economic vulnerability tied to exploitative employers can discourage migrant women from seeking legal action. Many are compelled to accept low-wage jobs due to financial pressures,

which restricts their ability to pursue better opportunities. The fear of losing essential financial support for their families peretuates a cycle of dependency on exploitative employers, hindering their capacity to take time off to seek justice..

9. Migrant laborers, particularly women, often encounter cultural stigma and negative societal perceptions, which may deter them from pursuing legal assistance. The apprehension of being perceived as troublemakers for seeking justice can exacerbate their isolation and hinder advocacy for their rights. Social biases against migrant workers frequently result in discrimination, intensifying heir difficulties.

10. The absence of a coherent and consistent labor policy framework generates confusion among workers regarding their rights and protections. Disjointed and ambiguous policies can lead to inconsistent enforcement of laws, leaving certain workers vulnerable to exploitation. The lack of a unified strategy for labor rights further complicates the situation for migrant women striving for justice. This analysis underscores the multifaceted challenges that migrant women laborers face in obtaiing judicial protection and labor rights, highlighting the urgent need for systemic reforms and greater awareness.

CONCLUSION

The path to achieving labor rights and judicial protections for migrant women workers in India is obstructed by a myriad of systemic challenges. Prominent among these are inadequately funded and frequently corrupt enforcement bodies, inconsistent labor protections across different states, and a limited awareness among migrant women regarding their rights. Additionally, language barriers and a lack of affordable legal assistance hinder their capacity to effectively engage with the judicial system. While Pblic Interest Litigations (PILs) may provide temporary relief from labor injustices, a more comprehensive and enduring solution necessitates significant policy reforms aimed at addressing structural poverty, enhancing educational access, and mitigating economic vulnerabilities. Furthermore, cultural stigma and the fear of social exclusion discourage many migrant women from claiming their rights, perpetuating their reliance on exploitative employers. A coordinated, multi-faceted strategy that includes spcialized labor courts, improved inter-state collaboration, accessible legal support, and focused awareness initiatives is crucial to meet the specific needs of these workers. Emphasizing such strategies can create a labor environment that genuinely safeguards and empowers migrant women, facilitating their integration into a fairer and more inclusive work.

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24. USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEGAL RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally transformed the practice of law, particularly the domain of legal research. Historically, legal professionals relied on extensive libraries, physical volumes of case reporters, and cumbersome manual indexing systems to locate relevant statutes, precedents, and scholarly commentary. Today, AI-powered platforms such as ROSS Intelligence, LexisNexis, Westlaw Edge, and India-specific tools like SCC Online and Manupatra have dramatically streamlined the process of legal research, enabling lawyers, judges, and academics to retrieve precise information in a fraction of the time previously required.

This research paper examines the nature and scope of technology and AI use in legal research, tracing its historical evolution, analysing its current applications, and evaluating the legal, ethical, and professional challenges it presents. The paper also investigates the specific research problem of whether reliance on AI in legal research poses risks to the quality of legal reasoning and the integrity of the judicial process, and proposes answers grounded in comparative analysis and Indian legal context. The paper concludes with a nuanced assessment: while AI is an indispensable tool for modern legal practice, it must supplement—not replace—the critical human judgment that lies at the heart of the law.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Legal Research, Natural Language Processing, LegalTech, Predictive Analytics, Information Technology Act 2000, Judicial Efficiency.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of law and technology is not new. From the invention of the printing press that democratised access to legal texts in the fifteenth century, to the computerisation of court records in the twentieth century, each technological leap has reshaped the practice of law. However, the emergence of artificial intelligence in the twenty-first century constitutes a paradigmatic shift—one that is qualitatively different from all prior technological interventions in the legal field.

Legal research is the bedrock of any legal system. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer observed that *"law divorced from facts is barren abstraction."*[1] This aphorism underscores that effective legal reasoning depends upon the lawyer's ability to retrieve, synthesise, and apply accurate legal authorities. Traditionally, this process demanded years of professional training, access to well-stocked law libraries, and a meticulous, often time-consuming, search through volumes of law reports.

With the proliferation of legal databases—SCC Online, Manupatra, and IndiaKanoon in India; Westlaw and LexisNexis internationally—the first wave of legaltech transformed access to primary legal materials.[2] Today, the second and more disruptive wave is driven by AI: machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and predictive analytics are

being deployed to automate not merely retrieval, but also analysis, prediction, and even drafting of legal documents.
This paper explores whether this transformation empowers or imperils the legal profession, and what regulatory and ethical frameworks are needed to govern AI's growing role in legal practice in India and globally.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The central research problem of this paper is:

> *Does the increasing reliance on artificial intelligence and technology in legal research enhance or undermine the quality of legal reasoning, access to justice, and the integrity of judicial processes in India? And what regulatory framework is required to govern its responsible use?*

This problem arises from a fundamental tension: AI holds the promise of democratising legal research by reducing cost barriers and improving efficiency, yet it also risks introducing algorithmic bias, reducing the depth of legal reasoning, and creating over-reliance on machine outputs without critical human scrutiny.

Sub-Questions

1. What AI tools are currently used in legal research, and how do they function?

2. How does AI impact the quality and depth of legal reasoning?

3. What ethical challenges does AI raise in the legal profession?

4. Is there an adequate regulatory framework in India governing AI in legal services?[3]

III. EVOLUTION OF LEGAL RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY

A. The Pre-Digital Era

Before computerisation, legal research in India was confined to physical law libraries. Practitioners relied on the All India Reporter (AIR), the Supreme Court Cases (SCC) series, and regional High Court reporters. The process was linear and labour-intensive: a lawyer would manually search through headnotes, indices, and digests to locate relevant precedents, often spending days on what a digital search now resolves in seconds.

B. First-Generation Legaltech: Digitisation

The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the digitisation of legal materials. Platforms such as SCC Online (launched 1996) and Manupatra (launched 2000) made it possible to perform Boolean keyword searches across millions of court judgments. The e-Courts Mission Mode Project, launched under the National e-Governance Plan, further digitised court records.[4]

C. Second-Generation Legaltech: AI and NLP

The second generation, beginning around 2010 and accelerating with the launch of large language models (LLMs) post-2020, brought AI-driven tools. ROSS Intelligence, built on IBM Watson, was among the first AI legal research tools. Globally, platforms now use NLP to understand natural language queries—enabling a lawyer to ask "What is the Indian Supreme Court's position on custodial torture?" rather than constructing Boolean searches.[5]

IV. AI APPLICATIONS IN LEGAL RESEARCH

A. Natural Language Processing and Case Law Retrieval

NLP-powered search engines parse the semantic meaning of legal queries rather than

merely matching keywords. Tools like LexisNexis Lexis+ AI and Thomson Reuters CoCounsel can contextualise queries within specific areas of law, filter results by jurisdiction, and rank outputs by relevance and recency. In India, SCC Online's AI-assisted search and Manupatra's AITM (AI Text Mining) module perform similar functions.

B. Predictive Analytics

Predictive analytics tools analyse historical judicial data to forecast litigation outcomes. Platforms like Premonition AI and Lex Machina (US) claim to predict, with statistical accuracy, how particular judges have ruled in similar matters. In India, early-stage tools analyse High Court and Supreme Court data to identify trends.[6]

C. Contract Analysis and Due Diligence

AI contract review tools such as Kira Systems and Luminance scan thousands of pages of contracts for specific clauses, anomalies, and risk factors, automating a process that once required entire teams of junior associates. Indian firms are rapidly adopting similar tools for mergers and acquisitions due diligence.

D. Legal Chatbots and Access to Justice

Perhaps the most socially significant application is the use of AI chatbots to democratise access to legal information. Tools like DoNotPay (internationally) and TRAI's AI grievance chatbot (India) enable citizens without formal legal training to understand their rights, draft basic legal notices, and navigate court procedures.[7]

V. CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

A. Algorithmic Bias

AI systems trained on historical legal data risk perpetuating systemic biases present in past judicial decisions. If an AI model is trained predominantly on Supreme Court and High Court data, it may underrepresent the jurisprudence of subordinate courts or marginalised legal traditions. This is especially concerning in matters involving minority rights, gender justice, and tribal law in India.

B. Hallucination and Accuracy Concerns

Large language models are known to "hallucinate"—generating plausible but factually incorrect outputs. In 2023, a New York attorney was sanctioned by a federal court for submitting AI-generated briefs that cited non-existent cases.[8] This highlights the danger of uncritical reliance on AI-generated legal research.

C. Professional Ethics and the Advocates Act, 1961

The Bar Council of India, under the Advocates Act, 1961, imposes a duty of competence, honesty, and diligence on advocates. If an advocate submits AI-generated research without verification, this may constitute professional misconduct. No specific BCI guidelines yet govern AI use, creating a regulatory lacuna that urgently requires attention.

D. Data Privacy and the DPDP Act, 2023

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) imposes obligations on data fiduciaries processing personal data. Legal AI platforms that ingest client documents, litigation strategies, or confidential communications must comply with consent, purpose limitation, and data localisation obligations.[9]

E. Displacement of Legal Professionals

A 2023 Goldman Sachs report estimated that AI could automate approximately 44% of legal tasks currently performed by lawyers. While this does not imply wholesale displacement, it does presage a restructuring of the legal profession—particularly for entry-level research positions traditionally occupied by junior associates and law interns.

VI. ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem posed whether AI enhances or undermines legal reasoning and judicial integrity. The evidence, upon analysis, supports a nuanced, bifurcated answer.

A. Enhancement

AI unambiguously enhances the efficiency, comprehensiveness, and accessibility of legal research. It eliminates drudge work, reduces costs, and enables legal professionals to allocate cognitive resources to higher-order analytical tasks. For underserved litigants unable to afford legal representation, AI-powered legal aid tools represent a meaningful advance in access to justice—a constitutional imperative under Article 39A of the Indian Constitution.

B. Threat

Simultaneously, uncritical reliance on AI threatens the integrity of legal reasoning. The hallucination problem, algorithmic bias, and the erosion of deep reading and analytical skills pose genuine risks. The Supreme Court of India, in *Arjun Panditrao Khotkar v. Kailash Kushanrao Gorantyal* (2020),[10] emphasised the importance of precise application of law—a task that demands judicial intelligence that no AI currently possesses.

C. The Regulatory Answer

India must develop a targeted regulatory framework for AI in legal services. This should include:

(i) BCI guidelines mandating verification of AI-generated research; (ii) disclosure obligations when AI tools are used in court submissions; (iii) DPDP Act compliance protocols for legal AI platforms; and (iv) a Supreme Court Committee on AI and Judicial Technology to periodically review AI's role in court administration and legal research.

VII. CONCLUSION

Technology and artificial intelligence represent both the greatest opportunity and the most significant challenge the legal profession has faced in centuries. In India, where access to justice remains deeply inequitable—with pendency of over 50 million cases in courts—AI has the potential to be transformative. Yet this transformation must be managed with rigour, ethical awareness, and regulatory wisdom.

The appropriate paradigm is AI as a tool, not a replacement. As Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India (2022–2024), observed, technology should serve the ends of justice, not subvert them.[11] Legal professionals must embrace AI's efficiency gains while preserving the irreplaceable human qualities of empathy, ethical judgment, and contextual legal reasoning.

Ultimately, the law is not merely a set of rules but a living system of norms that reflects society's values. No algorithm can fully comprehend the human dignity that lies at the heart of every legal dispute. AI can illuminate the path; it is the lawyer and the judge who must walk it.

FOOTNOTES

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25. CASTE SYSTEM IN TAMIL SOCIETY: A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT
The caste system has been one of the most influential social institutions in Tamil society, shaping social hierarchy, occupational patterns, and cultural practices for centuries. Tamil literature has consistently reflected the realities of caste, while also serving as a powerful medium to question and challenge caste-based discrimination. From classical literary texts to modern and Dalit writings, authors have portrayed the lived experiences of marginalized communities and exposed social inequalities rooted in caste. This study examines the representation of the caste system in Tamil literature and analyzes how literary works function as instruments of social critique and reform. By adopting a literary perspective, the research highlights the role of Tamil literature in raising social awareness, promoting equality, and contributing to the discourse on social justice in Tamil society.
KEYWORDS: *Caste System, Tamil Society, Tamil Literature, Social Inequality, Dalit Literature, Social Reform.*

INTRODUCTION

Literature as Living Social Consciousness

Tamil literature must be understood as a living system of social consciousness rather than a static collection of texts. It functions as a medium through which historical memory is preserved and continuously reinterpreted. In Tamil cultural history, literature has never existed outside society; instead, it operates within society as a mechanism that shapes how individuals and communities understand hierarchy, identity, and belonging. Caste, in this context, becomes not merely a structural arrangement of occupation but a deeply internalized symbolic system that governs dignity, purity, and access to knowledge.

The persistence of caste in Tamil society demonstrates that it is not only a social institution but also a cultural narrative reproduced through literature, religion, and everyday discourse. Tamil literary tradition reveals that caste is not static but historically constructed and continuously redefined. As literary forms evolve, so too does the representation of caste, moving from implicit symbolic hierarchies in classical texts to explicit ideological confrontation in modern and Dalit literature. This historical movement demonstrates that literature is not passive documentation but active participation in shaping social reality.[1]

Classical Tamil Literature and Symbolic Hierarchy

In the classical phase of Tamil literature, particularly within the Sangam corpus, social life is organized through ecological landscapes known as *tinai*. These classifications structure human experience according to natural environments, creating an impression of fluid and non-hierarchical social organization. However, this apparent fluidity conceals underlying structures of inequality that become visible upon closer literary analysis.

Kings, chieftains, and patrons occupy dominant positions within poetic representation, while poets and performers depend on systems of patronage for survival. Laboring communities, although present in the literary landscape, are often described in functional or collective terms rather than as individualized subjects. This asymmetry in representation indicates that hierarchy operates at the level of visibility and narrative attention, even when not formally codified as caste. The poetic economy itself reflects unequal power relations, suggesting that early Tamil

society already contained proto-hierarchical structures that would later evolve into more rigid caste formations.[2]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by several central research questions that explore the relationship between caste and Tamil literature. The primary question investigates how caste is represented and transformed across different phases of Tamil literary history. A secondary question examines how literature functions both as a mechanism of reinforcing caste ideology and as a medium of resistance against it.

Another important question focuses on how colonial intervention altered the representation of caste in Tamil literary imagination and whether this transformation led to new forms of caste consciousness. The study also explores how Dalit literature redefines narrative authority by shifting from representation to lived experience. Finally, it examines whether contemporary Tamil literature reflects the disappearance of caste or its transformation into more subtle institutional forms.[5]

Bhakti Movement and Ideological Contradiction

The Bhakti movement introduces a major transformation in Tamil literary and religious thought by emphasizing emotional devotion as the primary path to divine connection. Bhakti literature constructs an ideological vision of spiritual equality in which all individuals, regardless of caste identity, are capable of attaining divine grace. This emotional universalism creates a powerful critique of social hierarchy at the level of spiritual experience.

However, this spiritual egalitarianism remains deeply contradictory when examined in relation to material social reality. The lived experiences of marginalized devotees reveal that social exclusion continues despite spiritual inclusion. The narrative of Nandanar, for instance, illustrates this contradiction with clarity, as his devotion is accepted in the divine realm but rejected within social space. This duality demonstrates that Bhakti literature does not dismantle caste structures but instead displaces them into a spiritual register, resolving inequality symbolically while leaving its social foundations intact.[3]

Colonial Modernity and the Fixing of Identity

The colonial period represents a decisive rupture in the representation of caste within Tamil literature. British administrative systems, particularly census operations and ethnographic classification, transformed caste from a flexible and context-dependent identity into a rigid and essentialized category. This process fundamentally altered how caste was understood, both socially and literarily.

As caste became an official category of governance, it also became more visible and fixed in literary discourse. Writers began to engage with caste as a defined social identity rather than an implicit structure. At the same time, colonial modernity generated intellectual resistance through reformist and nationalist thought, leading to new literary expressions that questioned inequality and advocated social transformation. Literature during this period becomes a

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contested ideological space where colonial classification and indigenous reinterpretation coexist in tension, producing new forms of caste consciousness.[4]

Modern Reform and Ideological Critique

In modern Tamil literature, Subramania Bharati emerges as a central figure who articulates a radical humanist critique of caste. His poetry envisions a society based on equality, freedom, and rational thought, explicitly rejecting caste as incompatible with human dignity. Bharati's literary imagination reflects a modernist aspiration toward social transformation, where caste is seen as a barrier to national and human progress.

In contrast, E.V. Ramasamy (Periyar) develops a structural critique that goes beyond moral condemnation. He argues that caste is not merely a cultural tradition but an ideological system sustained through religion, education, and social institutions such as marriage. His writings expose caste as a mechanism of domination embedded in everyday life, thereby shifting the discourse from ethical reform to systemic analysis. This intellectual shift lays the foundation for later radical anti-caste movements in Tamil society.[5]

Dalit Literature and Epistemological Transformation

Dalit literature represents a fundamental epistemological break in Tamil literary history. It redefines narrative authority by shifting it from elite representation to lived experience. In this literary form, caste is not an abstract concept but a lived reality marked by humiliation, exclusion, and violence. The emergence of Dalit writing transforms literature into a space of testimony, where personal memory becomes a form of historical knowledge.

Bama's *Karukku* stands as a foundational text in this transformation. It exposes the intersection of caste, religion, and gender through autobiographical narration, revealing how oppression operates through both institutional structures and psychological conditioning. Dalit literature therefore functions as a counter-history that challenges dominant narratives and reclaims marginalized subjectivity. It destabilizes traditional literary aesthetics by prioritizing experience over ornamentation, thereby redefining the purpose of literature itself.[6]

Contemporary Literature and Invisible Caste

In contemporary Tamil literature, caste continues to exist but in more subtle and institutionalized forms. Urbanization creates the appearance of caste neutrality, yet caste persists through education systems, employment structures, housing segregation, and social networks. It becomes less visible but more deeply embedded in institutional life.

Modern literary works increasingly focus on these invisible mechanisms of exclusion, revealing how caste adapts to changing social conditions rather than disappearing. At the same time, new forms of resistance emerge through identity assertion, cultural redefinition, and digital expression. Contemporary literature thus reflects both the persistence of caste and the evolving strategies of challenging it in modern society.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study of caste representation in Tamil literature has evolved through multiple intellectual phases, shaped by literary criticism, colonial historiography, sociological theory, and Dalit epistemology. Early academic approaches to Tamil literature, particularly those focused on Sangam texts, were largely influenced by aesthetic and philological readings. Scholars such as Kamil Zvelebil interpreted Sangam poetry through the framework of ecological classification, arguing that early Tamil society was organized around landscape-based divisions known as *tinai* rather than rigid caste hierarchies. This interpretation presented early Tamil culture as relatively fluid and non-hierarchical in structure. However, later critical engagements have challenged this view by demonstrating that even within this ecological system, hierarchical relations of power, patronage, and representation are clearly embedded, suggesting that inequality existed in symbolic rather than codified caste form.A major theoretical transformation in caste studies was introduced by Nicholas Dirks, who argued that caste as a rigid and all-encompassing identity category was significantly reshaped during the colonial period. According to Dirks, British administrative practices such as census classification and ethnographic documentation played a crucial role in converting flexible social identities into fixed and essentialized caste categories. This argument is particularly important for Tamil literary studies because it suggests that modern representations of caste in literature are deeply influenced by colonial knowledge systems that redefined identity itself as static and measurable.A.K. Ramanujan's translations and interpretations of Tamil classical literature contributed significantly to global recognition of Tamil literary richness. His work highlighted the aesthetic beauty, emotional depth, and philosophical insight of early Tamil texts. However,

subsequent scholarship has critiqued this aesthetic emphasis for overlooking embedded social hierarchies and structural inequalities within these texts. This tension between literary appreciation and socio-political critique continues to shape contemporary Tamil literary studies.Dalit literary criticism represents a radical epistemological shift in this field. Scholars such as M.S.S. Pandian argue that Dalit literature cannot be understood as a thematic extension of Tamil literary tradition but rather as a rupture in narrative authority itself. Dalit writing repositions marginalized communities from objects of representation to subjects of narration, thereby challenging dominant literary hierarchies and redefining knowledge production.[3] Feminist and intersectional scholars further expand this framework by analyzing how caste intersects with gender, particularly in the lived experiences of Dalit women, revealing layered structures of oppression.Contemporary research also explores caste in urban, digital, and cinematic spaces, where it becomes less visible but continues to operate through institutional and cultural mechanisms. Overall, the literature reveals a clear intellectual trajectory from aesthetic interpretation to structural critique and finally to epistemological transformation.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretative research methodology grounded in literary analysis and cultural theory. The primary method used is close textual reading of selected Tamil literary works across different historical periods, including Sangam literature, Bhakti poetry, colonial writings, modern reformist texts, and Dalit literature. The texts are analyzed not only for their thematic content but also for their ideological structure, narrative strategies, and representation of social hierarchy.

The study is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing upon literary theory, sociology of caste, postcolonial studies, and Dalit epistemology. Postcolonial theory is used to understand how colonial governance restructured caste identity through classification and documentation. Sociological approaches help in analyzing caste as a lived social structure embedded in everyday practices. Dalit epistemology is employed to understand literature as a form of lived experience and resistance rather than purely aesthetic production.

The research also follows a historical-comparative approach, tracing changes in caste

representation across different literary periods. Instead of treating texts in isolation, the study examines them as part of a continuous cultural and ideological evolution. This allows for a deeper understanding of how caste is constructed, transformed, and contested in Tamil literary tradition.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to the representation and interpretation of caste in major phases of Tamil literary history. It covers classical Sangam literature, Bhakti devotional literature, colonial and reformist writings, modern nationalist literature, and selected Dalit literary works. The study focuses primarily on Tamil Nadu literary tradition and does not extend to comparative analysis with other regional literatures except where necessary for theoretical context.

The study does not attempt to provide a sociological survey of caste in contemporary society but instead focuses on literary representation and ideological construction. It examines how literature reflects and shapes caste consciousness rather than measuring caste as a demographic or statistical phenomenon. The emphasis is on textual analysis, ideological interpretation, and historical transformation of narrative structures.

CONCLUSION: Literature as Historical Force

The representation of caste in Tamil literature demonstrates that literature is not merely a reflection of society but an active force in shaping historical consciousness. Across its historical evolution, Tamil literature continuously engages with caste as a central social reality, transforming its meaning across different ideological contexts. From symbolic hierarchy in classical texts to spiritual contradiction in Bhakti literature, from colonial redefinition to modern reformist critique and Dalit epistemological assertion, caste remains a persistent yet evolving structure within literary imagination.

\Tamil literature therefore functions as both an archive of inequality and a medium of resistance. It preserves historical forms of domination while simultaneously generating possibilities for critique and transformation. In this sense, literature becomes a crucial site where social reality is not only represented but actively reimagined.[7]

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26. INVISIBLE BEHIND BARS: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND REHABILITATION OF TRANSGENDER PRISONERS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India's prisoner rehabilitation system is founded on the reformative theory of punishment, but transgender inmates are still among the most marginalized and neglected groups in the criminal justice system. Transgender inmates are frequently subjected to discrimination and institutional support during custodial interrogation, which leads to significant human rights abuses, even though constitutional protections guarantee equality, dignity, and personal freedom. They are susceptible to harassment, abuse, and denial of legal protections due to the lack of gender-sensitive protocols. Following release, the rehabilitation process is further disrupted by deeply ingrained social stigma, exclusion from employment, lack of housing, and the absence of well-structured post-release support systems. Many transgender former inmates are driven to poverty, social isolation, and repeated conflict with the law. This research intends to analyse the intersection of custodial interrogation practices, human rights violations, and post-release social exclusion faced by transgender prisoners in India, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the current rehabilitation framework and propose inclusive reformative measures using a doctrinal research carried out with the help of data and information gathered from articles, journals and other resources.

KEY WORDS : Marginalized groups, Transgender, Social stigma, Rehabilitation, Human rights violations.

INTRODUCTION :

A society is truly reflected in the way it treats those who live at its margins. Among the most invisible and vulnerable groups in India are transgender persons, whose everyday lives are often faced by discrimination, exclusion and social neglect. This vulnerability becomes even more severe when transgender persons come into contact with the criminal justice system and are placed inside prisons. People from the lowest groups and lower castes are subjected to discrimination particularly in prisons. Although imprisonment always entails limiting some freedoms, it does not revoke the basic rights granted to people by the Indian Constitution. The right to life, dignity, equality, and humane treatment continues to be maintained for prisoners. The rights of transgender individuals have gained more judicial acknowledgement in recent years, but their daily lives in custodial facilities continue to be neglected and overlooked.

In India, transgender people are among the most marginalized and at-risk communities. Due to their gender identity, they are often victims of economic hardship, violence, prejudice, and social exclusion. Serious human rights breaches, such as physical and sexual abuse, denial of medical and mental health care, misgendering, isolation, and arbitrary placement in male or female jails without adequate consideration of personal safety and dignity, are frequently caused by the absence of gender-sensitive policies, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of skilled prison staff. The current research attempts to assess the kind and frequency of human rights abuses experienced by transgender inmates in India, as well as to provide a critical analysis of the current legal and institutional framework that regulates their rehabilitation. The goal of the study is to assess the efficacy of existing laws and policies, pinpoint implementation gaps, and suggest actions to establish a rights-based, inclusive, and gender-sensitive correctional system that respects the dignity and constitutional rights of transgender inmates.

MEANING OF TRANSGENDER PERSONS:

Transgender people are those whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth and who are frequently subjected to stigma, neglect, and different forms of abuse in society. The Indian government passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 in order

to protect their rights and guarantee legal acknowledgement. According to Section 2(k) of the Act, a "transgender person" is defined as follows :

"[1]A person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta".

REHABILITATION OF PRISONERS :

Rehabilitation refers to the return to the former state, the recovery of the position that a person held prior to the harm or injury. The Latin words re-meaning "again," and habitare, meaning "make fit," are the source of the term "rehabilitation." To bring the person back to the state where they can resume their life as it was before the accident.

Rehabilitation in the legal sense refers to helping the criminal through education, support programs, and various campaigns to reintegrate into society as someone who adheres to the law and respects all facets of society. It also aims to foster an individual's growth and prevent them from repeating the same or other misdeeds**.** The premise that individuals are more than their crimes forms the basis for prisoner rehabilitation in India. The goal of punishment is not only to confine or punish an offender, but also to assist them in rehabilitation, healing, and reintegration into society as accountable people. In most cases, crime is caused by circumstance rather than by nature. As a result, prisons are intended to be places of rehabilitation and treatment, not just places of misery. The core idea behind India's transgender prisoner rehabilitation program is that incarceration does not diminish a person's humanity, and gender identity does not negate it. Like every other inmate, transgender prisoners deserve to be punished in accordance with the law as well as to receive compassion, understanding, and the chance to start over. Rehabilitation for transgender individuals is about more than just changing criminal behaviour; it's about giving them back the respect, security, and sense of community that society has frequently denied them, even before they were imprisoned. Following family rejection, social exclusion, poverty, poor education, and discrimination, many transgender offenders enter the criminal justice system. In such instances, crime is more often related to survival than to criminal intent. Therefore, rehabilitation must start with empathy and knowledge of these systemic drawbacks.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE :

Despite the fact that transgender people are not specifically mentioned as a distinct group in the Constitution of India, its protections are based on the universal principle that all people, regardless of their gender identity, have the right to live with dignity, equality, and freedom from prejudice. As a result, the constitutional concept of justice, liberty, and equality requires the State to make certain that transgender convicts are treated not only as inmates, but also as human beings who merit protection, care, and meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation.

Article 14[2] – Equality before law :

The Court concluded that the term "persons" in the article does not solely apply to males and females. Transgender persons are neither men nor women, the term "person" covers them, and thus they are entitled to legal protections like equal civil and citizenship rights. By refusing to recognize transgender individuals' identity, they are denied equal legal protection and are thus disproportionately susceptible to violence, sexual assault, and harassment in public settings, as well as significant discrimination in all facets of society. Consequently, the Court concluded that Article 14 forbids discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation**.**

Articles 15,16[3] – Prohibition of Discrimination and Equality of Opportunity for Transgender

[1] Transgender persons (protection of rights) Act of 2019.

[2] INDIA CONST. art. 14, amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

[3] INDIA CONST. art. 15,16, amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

Prisoners :

The Court determined that discrimination based on gender identity is included under discrimination based on sex. "Sex" encompasses gender identity, not simply biological sex, and is meant to include individuals who identify as neither male nor female. In addition to other requirements, Articles 15 and 16 mandate that the State take positive steps to help those members of society who are more disadvantaged in terms of education and society. The Court ruled that transgender people have been systematically denied their rights and have suffered prejudice, and that the State has a duty to take positive measures to help them attain equality.

Article 20(3)[4] – Protection against Self-Incrimination :

According to Article 20(3) of the Constitution, nobody may be forced to testify against themselves if they are accused of any offense. The verbal abuse, threats, and physical coercion that transgender inmates endure during custodial interrogation not only violates the constitutional guarantee under Article 20(3), but also aggravate the psychological trauma they experience. These infractions have a long-lasting impact on inmates mental health and significantly reduce their chances of rehabilitation.

Article 21[5] – Right to life and Personal liberty :

According to Article 21 of the Constitution, no one may be deprived of his or her life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. The scope of this provision has been continually extended by judicial interpretation to include the right to live with dignity, privacy, healthcare, and humane conditions of detention because of their increased vulnerability to physical violence, sexual assault, psychological injury, and institutional prejudice in custodial environments, the right to life with dignity takes on greater importance for transgender inmates. These behaviours undermine the correctional objective of incarceration and pose major obstacles to rehabilitation and social reintegration. As a result, Article 21 imposes a constitutional duty to make sure that transgender inmates have a prison atmosphere that is safe, inclusive, and compassionate.

STATUTORY LAW :

Transgender persons (protection of rights) Act of 2019[6] :

The enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 represents a significant legislative step towards the protection and social participation of transgender persons in India. The Act prohibits discrimination against transgender persons in areas such as education, employment, healthcare, access to public services and opportunities for them are less in public life. It further imposes a positive obligation upon the appropriate Government to take welfare measures, including the formulation of schemes and programmes aimed at facilitating vocational training, self-employment, rescue, rehabilitation and social reintegration of transgender persons. Although the statute does not contain prison-specific provisions, its underlying mandate of non-discrimination and rehabilitation necessarily extends to transgender prisoners, who continue to remain entitled to the protection of statutory and constitutional guarantees.

JUDICIAL INTEPRETATION :

1. NALSA vs Union of India (2014)[7] :

The Supreme Court formally acknowledged transgender people in India legislation as a distinct and recognized transgender persons as a "third gender" in the NALSA case. The Court stated clearly that every transgender individual has the right to live with respect, be treated fairly, and be shielded from prejudice under the Articles 14,15,16, and 21. The Court agreed that transgender people have experienced social exclusion, violence, and rejection for decades, and as a result, the Government must implement particular welfare and rehabilitation programs for them. This

[4] INDIA CONST. art. 20(3), amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

[5] INDIA CONST. art. 21, amended by The Constitution (Eightieth Amendment) Act, 2000.

[6] Transgender persons(protection of rights) Act of 2019.

[7] NALSA vs Union of India (2014) 5 SCC 438

decision is crucial for transgender inmates since a person's right to live with respect and equality, as well as their identity, are not forfeited just because they are in jail.

2. Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018)[8] :

In the Navtej Singh Johar case, the Supreme Court recognised that persons belonging to sexual and gender minorities have the same right to dignity, privacy and personal identity as every other citizen. The Court clearly stated that social prejudice and moral discomfort cannot be used as reasons to deny constitutional rights. This case supports the protection of transgender prisoners by affirming that stigma and discrimination cannot justify unsafe or degrading treatment inside prisons.

3. D.K. Basu vs State of Bengal (1997)[9] :

In the D.K. Basu case, the Supreme Court laid down clear rules to prevent abuse, torture and illegal practices by the police during arrest and interrogation. The Court said that no person in custody should be treated in a cruel or violent manner. This case is especially relevant for transgender persons because it helps protect them from physical and sexual abuse and arbitrary treatment during custodial interrogation.

4. Sunil Batra vs Delhi administration (1978)[10] :

In this case, the Supreme Court stated that individuals in prison remain human beings and do not forfeit their fundamental rights solely due to their incarceration. The Court harshly condemned the inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners, emphasizing that prison officials are required to treat prisoners with dignity and respect. This case advocates for the safeguarding of transgender prisoners, who frequently face abuse and maltreatment while in custody and during interrogation.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS :

1. Incorrect identification of one's gender identity :

Prison authorities frequently decide a person's placement based on their genitalia or a medical officer's examination, rather than the prisoner's self-identified gender. This results in poor housing choices and goes against the legal concept of gender self-identification in Indian legislation. In prison records, transgender inmates are frequently listed in the male/female binary, which hides their lived gender.

2. The danger of sexual assault, abuse, and violence :

Documented cases include transgender detainees claiming to have experienced sexual assault and physical abuse at the hands of jail staff and other prisoners, pointing to serious safety breaches. According to personal testimonies from Kerala jails, transgender inmates are sometimes subjected to coercion and exploitation by their cellmates, which can have serious health effects.

3. Discrimination and Isolation :

Many transgender inmates face prejudice from both personnel and other inmates, which results in social isolation, psychological harm, and vulnerability inside the prison system. Attempts to separate transgender prisoners for "safety" often lead to solitary confinement or exclusion from the wider prison community, exacerbating isolation and mental health problems.

Transgender inmates frequently lack access to gender-affirming treatment, such as hormones, therapy, or sufficient mental health support. This results in medical neglect, depression, and trauma. A lot of jails lack trained staff who are knowledgeable about the unique health requirements of transgender prisoners.

4. Insufficient medical care and a lack of gender-affirming therapy :

Transgender inmates frequently lack access to gender-affirming treatment, such as hormones, therapy, or sufficient mental health support. This results in medical neglect, depression, and trauma. A lot of jails lack trained staff who are knowledgeable about the unique health requirements of transgender prisoners

[8] Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018) 10 SCC 1

[9] D.K.Basu vs State of Bengal(1997) 1 SCC 416

[10] Sunil Batra vs Delhi Administration(1978) SCC (4) 494

5. Insufficient Awareness and Structural Readiness :

Due to a general lack of training in gender identity, the legal rights of transgender individuals, or how to treat them with respect, prison personnel frequently engage in misgendering, harassment, and discrimination. Despite the existence of legal protections on paper, such as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019, prisons frequently lack specialized infrastructure or policies (like segregated restrooms or private bathing areas) to support these rights.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES :

1. Mistaken Identity of Gender :

Transgender individuals are frequently identified and treated according to biological sex rather than self-identified gender, which results in humiliation, misgendering, and denial of dignity during interrogation.

2. Potential for Physical and Sexual Abuse :

Because of their vulnerability, transgender prisoners are more likely to experience physical abuse, sexual assault, and exploitation at the hands of police officers or other inmates during custodial interviews.

3. Absence of gender-sensitive practices :

Transgender people are subject to a variety of interrogation methods that are not consistent across genders. Detainment, questioning, and searches are common practice and often disregard dignity or privacy.

4. Psychological Bullying and Harassment :

During interrogations, transgender people are frequently subjected to verbal abuse, threats, ridicule, and manipulation, which results in anxiety, trauma, and psychological suffering.

5. Refusal of Legal Protections :

Sometimes, procedural safeguards like informing family members, having medical examinations, or having access to legal counsel are ignored, particularly if the prisoner has little social support.

6. Lack of Trained and Sensitive Staff :

Inappropriate questioning, discriminatory behavior, and infringements upon constitutional rights are frequently the consequence of inadequate training of law enforcement authorities on transgender rights.

7. Coercion and compelled confessions :

Transgender inmates are more susceptible to coercion, coerced confessions, or illegal imprisonment because they are afraid of violence and stigma.

8. Insufficient access to medical and mental health care :

During custody, immediate healthcare requirements, such as gender-affirming care and mental health support, are frequently ignored.

9. Implementation Gaps :

Even though the 2019 Act requires prompt assistance for transgender people, as of December 2023, just 65% of ID card applications had been handled, and more than 3,200 applications had been delayed outside the 30-day legislative timeline.

The complicated certification procedure makes it harder to identify oneself and does not address problems like police harassment and family rejection.

10. Social Discrimination :

Transgender people in India experience widespread rejection, bullying, and discrimination, which results in poor mental health. 31% of transgender people commit suicide, and 50% attempt suicide before turning 20.

According to a NALSA poll, 27% of respondents were refused treatment because of their gender identity. Insurance frequently covers the Rs 2–5 lakh expense of gender-affirming therapy. Although Ayushman Bharat TG Plus provides annual coverage of Rs 5 lakh, knowledge and availability are still low.

11. Economic Exclusion :

Due to hiring biases, workplace animosity, and a lack of gender-neutral facilities, individuals are

excluded from economic opportunities such as employment and entrepreneurship. The unemployment rate is 48% (ILO 2022), and 92% of the population experiences economic exclusion (NHRC 2018). Despite a 2024 circular on joint bank accounts, financial access is still restricted due to a lack of awareness and institutional weaknesses.

12. Obstacles to Education :

In India, the literacy rate among transgenders is 56.1%, which is lower than the national average of 74% (2011 Census). There is no national gender-sensitive curriculum, even if some states like Maharashtra and Kerala have taken inclusive steps.

13. Custodial Experiences (Nagpur Central Prison) :

The documented experience of a transwoman named Kiran Gawli, who was imprisoned in Nagpur Central Jail with other transwomen.She anticipated being housed with female inmates when she arrived, but she was instead transferred to the male unit without being questioned about her gender identity, which resulted in an instant breach of her dignity and security. While in custody, she and others were subjected to intrusive body searches, compelled to undress in front of male guards, and kept in a neglected ward used for inmates with contagious illnesses. They were denied crucial medical care, such hormone replacement therapy, as well as access to basic hygiene and respectful treatment, which resulted in terror, trauma, and a deep sense of uncertainty. The significant disparities between the legal protections and the real custodial practices experienced by transgender inmates in Indian prisons are demonstrated by this instance.

POST- RELEASE SOCIAL EXCLUSION :

Following their release from jail, a large number of transgender persons re-enter society with two notable labels at once: being transgender and being a prisoner. Stigma causes a different form of confinement that the prison gate leads to rather than freedom. Since they fear the stigma associated with having a criminal record, families who may have previously struggled to accept their gender identity are now hesitant to accept them back because landlords frequently turn down transgender tenants and former convicts, it can be challenging to locate rental housing when you have nowhere to return to. The labour market is just as bad; even talented individuals are turned down, driving some to resort to unlawful or hazardous means in order to support themselves. Everyday interactions, such as waiting in line, going to a clinic, or filling out forms, can be humiliating occasions where one's history and identity are always questioned. Due to the lack of organized reintegration assistance, many individuals suffer trauma, poverty, and isolation alone. Despite having legal protection and constitutional guarantees, Transgender people in India continue to experience discrimination. The cause of this exclusion is deeply rooted, not just the result of legislative gaps. Based on cultural norms, social attitudes, and systemic discrimination that limits transgender individuals access to fundamental rights and opportunities for people.

This ban is particularly heinous since it continues to unofficially apply the penalty even after the court has delivered its formal verdict. Even if the legal system may find a person innocent, society's opinions frequently deny them the actual resources they need to live a free life. Due to the lack of targeted post-release policies, halfway houses, career pathways, and awareness campaigns in a society with little compassion, transgender former inmates are compelled to rely mostly on their own resilience. In this world, release proves to be a fragile beginning rather than a conclusion, as the search for respect and acceptance is still unclear and ongoing. Therefore, being released from prison does not always restore a person's sense of worth or belonging; rather, society often upholds the penalty for an extended period of time after the conclusion of the sentence.

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR REHABILITATION :

Although most welfare schemes and institutional mechanisms for transgender persons in India are not specifically designed for prisoners, they assume crucial relevance for Transgender prisoners, at the stage of Post-Custodial Rehabilitation and Social reintegration.

1. SMILE Scheme- Holistic support for Transgender persons :

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) program offers focused well-being and rehabilitation aid to

transgender people in India. It strives for holistic development by addressing psychological, social, economic, and health concerns via medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development, and economic connections in order to raise the standard of living and lessen marginalization.

2. National Council for Transgender persons (NCTP) :

The National Council for Transgender Persons was established under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act and functions as a statutory body advising the Government on policy measures for welfare, rehabilitation and inclusion of transgender persons. This creates a structural platform for designing and monitoring rehabilitation programmes relevant for reintegration post-custody.

3. Garima Greh program for Shelter board :

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) program, which was launched in 2020, aims to help and rehabilitate transgender persons via the Garima Greh plan. In addition to providing housing, food, and medical treatment for needy transgender individuals, the program also guaranteed them a place to improve their skills and expand their capabilities. Initially, the program was approved for 12 shelter homes throughout India and hailed as a watershed moment in the institutional support for the transgender community.

4. Ayushman Bharat TG Plus :

India's Ayushman Bharat TG Plus plan is a health insurance program created just for the transgender population. It covers free treatment for secondary and tertiary care, including mental health treatment and gender-affirmation procedures, up to 5 lakh per year. By fostering inclusivity and dignity within the healthcare system, the initiative strives to guarantee that transgender people have equal access to healthcare. It is a component of the larger Ayushman Bharat program, which aims to increase healthcare access for marginalized communities throughout India.

5. State – Level Welfare Board :

The Government of Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in adopting welfare-oriented measures for transgender persons through the constitution of the Tamil Nadu Transgender Welfare Board in the year 2008. The Board was established in recognition of the unique and systemic difficulties faced by transgender persons, particularly those who are forced to leave their families and consequently remain without basic identity and civil documents such as birth certificates, educational certificates, community certificates, ration cards and voter identity cards.

6. Supreme Court Committee on Prison Reforms :

Supreme Court committees on prison reforms has recommended that transgender prisoners be treated at par with other inmates and that State governments and prison departments take effective measures to eradicate discrimination and violence against them. This includes training prison staff on appropriate interactions with transgender prisoners and ensuring that their rights and facilities are at par with other inmates. The need for structural reform and comprehensive healthcare is critical to ensure that transgender prisoners are treated with dignity and respect within the Indian prison system.

7. Infrastructure and Accommodation for Transgender prisoners – Ministry of Home Affairs,2022[11] :

Through its advisory bearing No. 17013/26/2021-PR dated 10 January 2022 on "Treatment and Care of Transgender Persons in Prisons", the Government of India's Ministry of Home Affairs has instructed prison officials in all states and union territories to establish appropriate and safe prison infrastructure for transgender prisoners by guaranteeing separate and suitable accommodation wherever necessary, privacy, safety, dignity, and access to basic facilities on par with other inmates. Additionally, the recommendation highlights the need for these institutional and infrastructure systems to respect the self-identified gender of transgender inmates and work to

[11] CareofTransgendersinPrisons_11012022.pdf https://share.google/Ct9NnPGSCVmGnDsRP, last visited at 08.02.2026

eradicate prejudice and abuse in jails.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

1. Yogyakarta Principles :

The Yogyakarta Principles, which deals with human rights in the field of sexual orientation, gender identity was released in November 2006.The principles and the addendum include a set of rules meant to apply the norms of international human rights law in order to combat the abuse of LGBTI individuals' human rights. They acknowledge the rights of transgender individuals to dignity, equality, personal safety, healthcare, and freedom from violence and discrimination, even when they are in state custody, such as in jails or detention facilities.

2. Nelson Mandela Rules :

The fundamental minimum standards for the humane treatment of all inmates are established by the Nelson Mandela Regulations. They emphasize that everyone in custody must be treated with respect and shielded from torture, abuse, and degrading treatment. The Rules also mandate that prisons offer adequate medical care, safe housing, and particular protection for vulnerable groups. Transgender inmates are more vulnerable to violence, humiliation, and neglect in correctional facilities, hence these principles are directly applicable to them.

CONCLUSION :

The condition of transgender prisoners in India reveals a deep gap between constitutional promises and custodial realities. While landmark judgments and progressive legislation formally recognize transgender persons as equal citizens entitled to dignity, liberty, and protection, weak implementation, inadequate infrastructure, and persistent social prejudice continue to undermine these guarantees inside prisons. Misidentification, exposure to violence, denial of gender-affirming healthcare, and exclusion from rehabilitation programmes show that rights often remain symbolic rather than practical. Even after release, the burden of stigma, unemployment, homelessness, and family rejection frequently pushes many back into vulnerability and conflict with the law, defeating the reformative goal of punishment.

Across the world, different jurisdictions are attempting alternative models. In countries such as Scotland, prison authorities have increasingly moved towards policies that consider self-identified gender, specialized risk assessments, and targeted support systems. Yet, debates continue, demonstrating that recognition alone is not sufficient without careful, humane, and consistent execution. The Indian experience reflects a similar challenge: legal celebration without administrative transformation leaves transgender inmates invisible.

A meaningful solution requires structural, legal, and attitudinal change. Prison administration must adopt a rights-based and gender-sensitive framework that begins with respecting self-identification at the time of admission and continues through housing, healthcare, safety, and access to programmes. The establishment of separate or specially designed accommodation units, where necessary and based on informed consent and safety evaluation, can reduce vulnerability without turning protection into isolation. Compulsory training of police and prison staff on gender identity, anti-discrimination norms, and mental-health awareness is essential to prevent abuse and coercion during custodial interrogation.

Rehabilitation must be reimagined as social restoration. This includes uninterrupted access to hormone therapy and counselling, educational and vocational opportunities, legal aid, and strong pre-release planning linked with housing schemes, employment networks, and community-based organizations. Welfare bodies, the National Council for Transgender Persons, and State Transgender Boards should actively monitor prison conditions and create accountability mechanisms so that violations are reported and remedied quickly. Independent inspection systems, complaint redressal procedures, and community participation can further ensure transparency.

Ultimately, a correctional system becomes just not when it merely detains, but when it affirms humanity. Transgender persons, including those in conflict with the law, are rights-bearing individuals whose identities must be recognized, whose safety must be guaranteed, and whose futures must be supported. Only through sincere implementation, institutional commitment, and

societal change can prisons move from spaces of exclusion to environments of dignity, equality, and genuine rehabilitation.

27. ARE RESERVATIONS NECESSARY FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES? A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN INDIA

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Abstract: India's reservation policy for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) stands among the world's most ambitious affirmative action programmes, constitutionally embedded since 1950. This paper examines whether such reservations remain necessary in contemporary India by analysing the historical context of caste-based discrimination, the constitutional framework, empirical evidence on outcomes, competing theoretical perspectives, and ongoing debates around sub-categorisation and reform. The paper concludes that while reservations have produced meaningful gains in representation and social mobility, structural inequalities persist and necessitate the continuation and reform of the reservation system for SCs and STs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute one of the most consequential and contested social policies in the democratic world. Since the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950, the state has committed itself to reserving seats in legislatures, government employment, and educational institutions for communities historically subjected to extreme social exclusion, discrimination, and economic marginalisation. The SC and ST communities represent approximately 16.6% and 8.6% of India's population respectively together constituting nearly a quarter of the country's citizens. Despite more than seven decades of affirmative action, disparities in literacy, income, land ownership, and political participation remain stark.[1]

Critics argue that reservations have become entrenched political instruments, that they generate reverse discrimination, and that a merit-driven, economically targeted approach would better serve national interests. Defenders counter that formal legal equality cannot dismantle the accumulated disadvantages of centuries of institutionalised caste discrimination. This paper navigates these contested waters by examining necessity through multiple lenses: historical justice, constitutional mandate, empirical evidence, and normative theory.[2]

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CASTE, UNTOUCHABILITY, AND TRIBAL EXCLUSION

A. The Caste System and Its Consequences

The caste system, rooted in the Hindu social order, stratified Indian society into rigid hereditary groups with occupational roles and social privileges determined at birth. At the bottom of this hierarchy were those classified as 'untouchables' now constitutionally referred to as Scheduled Castes subjected to enforced segregation, forced labour, denial of access to public resources, and systemic violence. The stigma of untouchability was not merely a social convention; it was enforced through religious sanction, legal exclusion, and economic coercion across centuries.[3]

Scheduled Tribes, comprising hundreds of indigenous communities across India's forests, hills, and hinterlands, faced a different but equally severe form of marginalisation. Colonial land alienation policies, displacement for forest conservation and development projects, and the denial of traditional rights left these communities isolated and impoverished. Unlike SCs who were integrated into the caste economy in subordinate positions, STs were often entirely excluded from the mainstream economic and political system.[4]

B. Pre-Constitutional Affirmative Action

Affirmative action for depressed classes predates the Indian Constitution. The colonial government introduced separate electorates for untouchables under the Communal Award of 1932,

famously opposed by Mahatma Gandhi and contested by B.R. Ambedkar. The Poona Pact of 1932, reached between Gandhi and Ambedkar, replaced separate electorates with reserved seats within joint electorates an arrangement that became the precursor to the post-independence reservation system.[5]

III. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A. Constitutional Provisions

The Constitution of India, drafted under the chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar himself, enshrines affirmative action as a fundamental commitment of the Indian state. Article 15(4) permits the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes or for SCs and STs. Article 16(4) allows reservations in appointments and posts under the state for inadequately represented backward classes. Articles 330 and 332 reserve seats for SCs and STs in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies respectively.[6]

These provisions were originally intended to last for ten years, subject to review. However, they have been successively extended by constitutional amendments reflecting a democratic consensus that the conditions warranting reservations have not been fully remedied. The Constitution (One Hundred and Fourth Amendment) Act, 2020 extended political reservations by another decade, until 2030.

B. Supreme Court Jurisprudence

The Supreme Court of India has played a decisive role in shaping reservation policy. The landmark judgment in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992) upheld the Mandal Commission's recommendations for OBC reservations while capping total reservations at 50%, except in exceptional circumstances. The Court also introduced the 'creamy layer' exclusion for OBCs though explicitly declining to apply it to SCs and STs, recognising the qualitatively distinct and persistent nature of caste-based discrimination faced by these communities.[7]

In 2024, the Supreme Court's judgment in *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh* permitted states to sub-categorise SC communities to ensure that the most marginalised among them receive proportional benefits a recognition that even within the SC umbrella, hierarchies of disadvantage exist.[8]

IV. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERSISTENT GAPS

A. Gains in Representation

Reservations have produced measurable gains in political and institutional representation. SC and ST members are now present across all levels of India's democratic structure in numbers that approximate their population share in reserved constituencies. In higher education, reservations have enabled tens of thousands of SC and ST students to access universities and professional colleges. Institutions such as the IITs and AIIMS, once virtually inaccessible to these communities, now have SC and ST students in every cohort. This expansion has created new professional classes among historically excluded communities, with documented intergenerational benefits in income and social status.[9]

B. Persistent Structural Inequalities

Despite these gains, structural inequalities remain severe. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) shows that SC and ST households have significantly lower rates of asset ownership, higher rates of malnutrition, and lower life expectancy than general category populations. Stunting prevalence among ST children stands at 43.8% against a national average of 35.5%; among SC children, the figure is 38.5%. Atrocities against Dalits including physical violence, sexual violence, and social boycotts remain disturbingly prevalent, with the National Crime Records Bureau consistently recording thousands of cases annually under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.[10]

A persistent concern in government employment is the phenomenon of 'backlog vacancies' reserved positions that remain unfilled because hiring authorities claim no eligible SC or ST candidates were available. As of 2021, over 1.2 lakh reserved posts remained unfilled across central government departments. Whether this reflects poor pipeline development or institutional

reluctance, it suggests that reservation policy requires better implementation architecture, not abandonment.[11]

V. COMPETING PERSPECTIVES ON NECESSITY

A. The Case for Reservations: Justice, Representation, and Recognition

Proponents ground their arguments in overlapping frameworks. From a compensatory justice perspective, reservations are morally necessary because they partially compensate communities for centuries of state-sanctioned exploitation and the systematic denial of economic opportunity. The wealth, land, and social capital that were denied to SC and ST communities for generations cannot be restored by simply declaring equality before the law active redistribution is required. Rawls's difference principle holds that inequalities are just only if they benefit the least-advantaged members of society, providing a philosophical anchor for this position.[12]

Representation theorists emphasise that democratic institutions cannot be considered fully legitimate if large sections of the population are structurally absent from decision-making. Reservations ensure that laws and policies are shaped by representatives who share the lived experience of marginalised communities. Ambedkar himself framed reservations as a political necessity for the annihilation of caste: without economic independence and political power, Dalits would remain subject to the social tyranny of dominant communities an argument that retains its force today, as economic data consistently shows that caste and economic disadvantage remain strongly correlated.[13]

B. The Case Against: Merit, Efficiency, and Social Division

Critics advance several powerful objections. The merit argument holds that reservations undermine standards in educational institutions and the civil service, imposing efficiency costs on the economy and public administration. However, this critique rests on a contestable premise that current markers of 'merit' are genuinely neutral. In fact, standardised tests and academic credentials reflect cumulative advantages of better schooling, tutoring, nutrition, and social networks that SC and ST students are systematically denied. Research demonstrates that students from disadvantaged backgrounds who gain access to quality institutions through affirmative action often perform at par with peers when controlling for prior school quality.[14]

A related critique holds that reservations entrench community identities and perpetuate social divisions rather than fostering integration. This concern has merit as a long-term observation, but conflates cause and effect: caste identity was not created by reservations it predated them by millennia and its persistence reflects the continued salience of caste in everyday social life.

C. The Creamy Layer Question

Some scholars advocate replacing caste-based reservations with income-based reservations, arguing the latter would more accurately target those in genuine need. The Supreme Court has so far declined to apply the creamy layer exclusion to SCs and STs on the grounds that social discrimination against these communities does not disappear with economic advancement a Dalit IAS officer or a wealthy ST entrepreneur still faces social prejudice. The 2024 *Davinder Singh* judgment implicitly affirmed that even relatively better-off Dalits remain subject to the structural stigma of untouchability.[15]

VI. REFORM DEBATES AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

A. Sub-Categorisation and Private Sector Reservations

One of the most significant recent debates concerns whether SC and ST communities should be sub-categorised so that the most marginalised among them receive preferential access within the reserved quota. Research has documented that within the broad SC umbrella, some communities have benefited far more from reservations than others the Madiga community in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, for instance, has long argued that the Mala community captures a disproportionate share of SC reservation benefits. The Supreme Court's 2024 ruling permitting state governments to sub-categorise SC and ST groups is a potentially transformative development, provided implementation is guided by rigorous data collection and political will to resist capture by relatively powerful groups within the categories.[16]

There is also a growing argument that reservations should be extended to the private sector, given that liberalisation has dramatically reduced government employment as a share of the economy. The private sector in India remains overwhelmingly dominated by upper-caste individuals at senior levels, and SC and ST entrepreneurs face documented discrimination in accessing credit, supply chains, and professional networks. Some scholars have proposed incentive structures rather than mandatory quotas to encourage diversity in the private sector.

B. International Comparisons

India's reservation system exists alongside affirmative action programmes in numerous countries. The United States' affirmative action in higher education recently struck down by the Supreme Court in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2023) was always less institutionalised and more narrowly targeted than India's system. Brazil has implemented racial quotas in federal universities; Malaysia has maintained Bumiputera preferences in public education and employment since the 1970s. Comparative evidence suggests that affirmative action programmes produce meaningful gains in representation when implemented in contexts of persistent structural disadvantage, but that their long-term effects depend heavily on complementary investments in education, health, and anti-discrimination enforcement.[17]

VII. CONCLUSION

The question of whether reservations are necessary for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes cannot be answered by abstract appeals to merit, equality, or efficiency without engaging with the specific historical, social, and empirical context of Indian society. That context is one in which centuries of institutionalised discrimination have produced enduring inequalities that cannot be remedied by formal legal equality alone.

The evidence examined in this paper supports three conclusions. First, reservations have achieved real and meaningful gains in political representation, government employment, and higher education access for SC and ST communities. Second, profound structural inequalities persist including ongoing caste discrimination, atrocities, land dispossession, and wage exploitation establishing that the conditions that originally warranted reservations have not been overcome. Third, the reservation system requires ongoing reform: through better implementation, sub-categorisation to reach the most marginalised, complementary social programmes, and a serious conversation about extending affirmative action principles to the private economy.

Reservations, understood not as a permanent privilege but as a transitional instrument in the service of a casteless democratic society, remain both necessary and morally defensible provided they are accompanied by the honest assessment, reform, and complementary investment they deserve. A society that treats the elimination of caste-based inequality as a genuine constitutional commitment cannot rely on formal equality alone. It must actively work to dismantle the accumulated disadvantages of history.

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[1] CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEBATES OF INDIA, Vol. VII (1948); see also B.R. AMBEDKAR, ANNIHILATION OF CASTE (1936) (Ambedkar argued political representation was a prerequisite for socio-economic emancipation).

[2] National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019–21, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (key indicators disaggregated by social group show SC/ST households consistently below national averages).

[3] S. Thorat, Oppression and Denial: Dalit Discrimination in the 1990s, 37(6) ECON. & POL. WKLY. 572, 572–78 (2002) (documenting occupational segregation, wage discrimination, and denial of credit).

[4] V. Xaxa, Tribes as Indigenous People of India, 34(51) ECON. & POL. WKLY. 3589, 3589–95 (1999) (colonial forest and land policies systematically displaced tribal communities from their traditional resource base).

[5] Communal Award, 14 Aug. 1932 (Ramsay MacDonald's arbitration award granting separate

electorates to Depressed Classes, Muslims, Sikhs, and other minorities); Poona Pact (1932) (replacing separate electorates with reserved seats within joint electorates).

[6] INDIA CONST. arts. 15(4), 16(4), 330, 332; see also INDIA CONST. arts. 244 (Fifth and Sixth Schedules providing for special administrative arrangements for tribal areas).

[7] Indra Sawhney v. Union of India, AIR 1993 SC 477 (upholding 27% OBC reservations while capping total reservations at 50%; declining to apply creamy layer exclusion to SCs and STs).

[8] State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh, Civil Appeal No. 2317 of 2011 (Supreme Court of India, 2024) (permitting state governments to sub-categorise SC communities for proportional allocation of reserved benefits).

[9] T.E. Weisskopf, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE UNITED STATES AND INDIA: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ch. 5 (Routledge 2004); M. Bertrand, R. Hanna & S. Mullainathan, Affirmative Action in Education: Evidence from Engineering College Admissions in India, 94(1–2) J. PUB. ECON. 16, 16–29 (2010) (reservation students graduate at similar rates and earn comparable wages).

[10] NFHS-5 (2019–21), supra note 2 (stunting prevalence among ST children: 43.8% vs. national average of 35.5%; SC children: 38.5%); National Crime Records Bureau, CRIME IN INDIA 2021 (Ministry of Home Affairs 2022).

[11] Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, ANNUAL REPORT 2020–21, at [backlog data] (Government of India 2021) (over 1.2 lakh reserved posts remained unfilled across central government departments as of 2021).

[12] JOHN RAWLS, A THEORY OF JUSTICE (Harvard Univ. Press 1971) (the 'difference principle' holds that inequalities are just only if they benefit the least-advantaged members of society).

[13] B.R. AMBEDKAR, ANNIHILATION OF CASTE (1936); IRIS MARION YOUNG, JUSTICE AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE (Princeton Univ. Press 1990) (differentiated citizenship requires recognition of group differences and special measures to include those excluded by dominant social norms).

[14] S.S. Jodhka & K. Newman, In the Name of Globalisation: Meritocracy, Productivity and the Hidden Language of Caste, 42(41) ECON. & POL. WKLY. 4125, 4125–32 (2007) (documenting how caste networks function as informal hiring mechanisms in private-sector firms, systematically excluding SC/ST applicants).

[15] A. Deshpande, THE GRAMMAR OF CASTE: ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA ch. 7 (Oxford Univ. Press 2011) (concluding that economic disadvantage and caste disadvantage are related but not identical); Davinder Singh, supra note 8.

[16] S. Thorat, DALITS IN INDIA: SEARCH FOR A COMMON DESTINY ch. [intra-SC inequalities] (Sage Publications 2009); National Commission for Scheduled Castes, ANNUAL REPORT 2020–21 (Government of India 2021) (recommending data collection on intra-SC disparities as a precondition for rational sub-categorisation).

[17] Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College, 600 U.S. 181 (2023) (striking down race-conscious admissions programmes at Harvard and UNC); H.-A. Lee, Affirmative Action in Malaysia: Education and Employment Outcomes since the 1970s, 16(1) J. INT'L DEV. 77, 77–105 (2004).

28. DIGITALIZATION AND THE USE OF AI IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The Indian judiciary, one of the largest and most complex judicial systems in the world, is currently burdened with an enormous backlog of cases exceeding 5 crore. This persistent delay in justice delivery has necessitated the adoption of innovative solutions, among which digital infrastructure and Artificial Intelligence (AI) play a crucial role. This paper explores the digital transformation of the Indian judicial system through digital initiatives and AI integration. It examines the evolution of court digitalization[1], the application of AI in legal processes, and the ethical and legal challenges associated with its implementation. While AI significantly enhances efficiency in legal research, case management, ethical challenges and transcription, it remains a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human judicial decision-making. The study concludes that a balanced approach combining technological innovation with human judgment is essential for achieving an efficient and fair justice delivery system[2].

Keywords: digital transformation, transcription, case management, ethical challenges,, digital infrastructure, digitalization.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian judicial system has undergone significant transformation over centuries. Its roots can be traced back to ancient times when justice was administered based on Dharmashastra principles. During the Mughal period, a more structured legal system emerged with officials such as Qazis and Mir-Adl. The British colonial era introduced formal legal institutions, codified laws, and established courts such as the Mayor's Courts and High Courts. After independence in 1950, India adopted a constitutional judiciary with the Supreme Court at its apex, ensuring the protection of fundamental rights.

Despite these developments, the judiciary continues to face major challenges, particularly the overwhelming backlog of cases, procedural delays, and administrative inefficiencies. With increasing population and litigation, traditional methods of legal administration have proven inadequate. This has led to the integration of digital technologies and AI as tools to modernize the judicial system and improve efficiency.

1. *DIGITALIZATION OF INDIAN JUDICIARY*

The digital transformation of the Indian judiciary began with the introduction of the **e-Courts Mission Mode Project**, a nationwide initiative aimed at modernizing judicial infrastructure using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The primary objective of this project is to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility in the justice delivery system.

Phases of Implementation

Phase 1 (2010–2015):

This phase focused on the basic computerization of courts. Thousands of district and subordinate courts were equipped with computers, servers, and local networks. Case Information Systems (CIS) were introduced to manage case data digitally.

Phase 2 (2015–Present):

This phase expanded digital services by introducing e-filing, video conferencing, online payment of court fees, and SMS/email notifications. The **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)**[3] was developed to provide real-time data on case pendency and disposal.

Phase 3 (2023–2027):

The upcoming phase envisions a fully integrated digital ecosystem. It includes AI-based intelligent scheduling, interoperable criminal justice systems, digital repositories of case laws, and advanced e-filing mechanisms.

Significance of Digitalization

Digitalization has transformed court functioning by enabling:

- Virtual hearings (especially during COVID-19)[4]
- Online access to case status
- Reduction in paperwork
- Improved transparency and accountability

Overall, digitalization has laid the foundation for the integration of AI in judicial processes.

2. *AI TECHNOLOGIES USED IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS*

Artificial Intelligence is revolutionizing the legal field by automating routine tasks and improving decision-making efficiency. AI technologies are increasingly being used in various aspects of legal practice.

Key Applications

1. Document Review and Analysis[5]:

AI tools can quickly analyze large volumes of legal documents, identify relevant information, and reduce the time required for manual review.

2. Predictive Analytics:

AI algorithms analyze past case data to predict possible outcomes, helping lawyers develop better legal strategies.

3. Legal Research:

AI-powered platforms can scan extensive legal databases and provide accurate results within seconds, significantly reducing research time.

4. Contract Management:

AI assists in drafting, reviewing, and analyzing contracts, identifying risks and ensuring compliance with legal standards.

5. Client Interaction:

AI chatbots handle client queries, provide updates, and improve communication efficiency.

Core Technologies[6]

- **Machine Learning (ML):** Enables systems to learn from data and improve performance over time
- **Optical Character Recognition (OCR):** Converts physical documents into searchable digital formats
- **Speech Recognition:** Transcribes spoken words into text, aiding court proceedings

These technologies collectively enhance accuracy, efficiency, and productivity in the legal system.

3. *APPLICATIONS OF AI IN INDIAN COURTS*

India has started integrating AI into its judicial framework to improve efficiency and accessibility.

Key AI Tools

- **SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency)[7]:** Assists judges in organizing and analyzing legal information
- **SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software)[8]:** Translates judgments into multiple Indian languages
- **AI Transcription Tools:** Convert court proceedings into written records in real-time

Government Initiatives

The government has launched several initiatives to support digitalization, including:

- Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR)
- Digital Courts 2.0
- Integration with Digital India programs

These initiatives aim to make legal information more accessible and improve the efficiency of judicial processes.

4. *ADVANTAGES OF AI AND DIGITALIZATION*

The integration of AI and digital technologies offers several benefits:

Reduction in Case Backlog:

AI-based scheduling and case management systems help prioritize cases and reduce delays.

Improved Efficiency:

Automation of routine tasks reduces workload and allows judges to focus on critical decision-making.

Transparency and Accountability:

Digital records and real-time updates enhance public trust in the judiciary.

Access to Justice:

Translation tools and online services make legal processes more accessible to diverse populations.

Enhanced Legal Research:

AI tools provide quick and accurate legal insights, improving the quality of legal work.

5. *CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS*

Despite its advantages, the use of AI in the judiciary presents several challenges:

Accuracy and Reliability Issues:

Errors in transcription or data analysis can affect case outcomes.

Data Privacy Concerns[9]:

Handling sensitive judicial data requires strong security measures.

Infrastructure Limitations:

Many courts lack adequate technological infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

Algorithmic Bias:

AI systems may reflect biases present in historical data.

High Implementation Costs:

Developing and maintaining AI systems requires significant investment.

Resistance to Adoption:

Legal professionals may be hesitant to rely on AI due to trust issues.

6. *CONCLUSION*

Artificial Intelligence and digitalization have the potential to transform the Indian judiciary by improving efficiency, transparency, and access to justice[10]. However, these technologies must be used cautiously, with proper safeguards to address ethical, legal, and infrastructural challenges.AI should be viewed as a supportive tool that enhances human capabilities rather than replacing judicial decision-making. A balanced approach that combines technological innovation with human judgment is essential for building a fair, efficient, and modern judicial system.

29. FROM EVIDENCE TO INTENT: CRIME SCENE RECORDING AND BEHAVIORAL PATTERN ANALYSIS IN CASES OF PSYCHOPATHY AND SERIAL OFFENSES

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Abstract

This research investigates the role of crime scene documentation in shaping psychiatric assessments and their subsequent influence on criminal sentencing, particularly in cases involving serial or psychopathic offenders. It critically examines four persistent deficiencies: the absence of standardized procedural frameworks for recording behavioural and psychological indicators at crime scenes; limited empirical analysis of procedural patterns through forensic psychology; insufficient legal scrutiny of the admissibility and probative value of psychologically interpreted documentation; and inadequate consideration of institutional and policing constraints affecting documentation quality. The study argues that procedural failures at the crime scene stage produce cascading consequences within the criminal justice system. Inadequate documentation of behavioural evidence compromises the accuracy of psychiatric diagnoses, thereby constraining judicial capacity to assess the relevance of mental disorders in determinations of guilt, mitigation, and sentencing. These evidentiary shortcomings directly influence decisions between incarceration and institutionalisation. By proposing a structured and uniform documentation framework, this research advances an evidence-driven approach to adjudication that aligns sentencing outcomes with both the gravity of criminal conduct and the legally significant impact of psychiatric conditions on criminal accountability.

Keywords: Crime scene documentation; serial and psychopathic offenders; behavioural pattern analysis; forensic psychology and psychiatry; psychiatric diagnosis in sentencing; evidentiary standards; procedural frameworks; legal accountability; institutional policing constraints

INTRODUCTION

This research investigates the use of crime scene evidence in the analysis of the intention and mental state of the offender, especially in serious crimes of psychopathy and serial offending, and asserts the importance of accurate crime scene documentation in crime solving and proof in court. In the Indian scenario, crime scene investigation is the foundation of the criminal justice system, and it is regulated by organized procedural standards in police manuals and forensic standards. Unrecorded evidence is likely to be damaged, contaminated, or lost, thus reducing its evidentiary potential. The research points out the challenges of resource constraints, lack of training, and procedural errors, while at the same time underlining the importance of better practices to ensure that physical evidence, environmental factors, and contextual facts are maintained in their original form. As the law makes a distinction between directly observable physical facts and internally existing psychological facts, crime scene documentation is the essential link through which courts later reconstruct and determine mens rea.

The study also emphasizes the need for the documentation of behavioural and psychological patterns at the crime scene, such as the repeated modus operandi, the same target choice, ritualistic behaviour, and excessive violence, which are of particular importance in the

identification of serial offenders and the comprehension of compulsive or pathological criminal behaviour. The study also emphasizes the need for coordination between law enforcement personnel, forensic scientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, as forensic psychiatric analysis helps to differentiate psychopathy from other mental disorders and to explain persistent criminal behaviour. The study also discusses how Indian courts use crime records and behavioural data, supported by case law, to establish criminal intent and liability, especially in cases involving mental illness. Finally, the study discusses sentencing issues, comparing imprisonment with mental health institutional treatment, and also discusses the issues of morality, rehabilitation, and recidivism, while suggesting the need for the integration of forensic psychology, data analysis, and AI-based technology to improve the Indian criminal justice system's response to serious and repeat crimes.

CRIME SCENE DOCUMENTATION IN INDIAN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Documentation of crime scenes in Indian criminal investigations is mainly focused on proving the occurrence of an offence by recording physical facts like the site of the crime, weapons used, injuries caused, and other physical traces of the crime. This is in line with the traditional approach to evidence, which emphasizes physical evidence. However, criminal responsibility under Indian law is not only dependent on the actus reus but also on the mens rea, and mere documentation of physical facts is not sufficient[1].

According to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, the procedures for recording and preserving evidence at the crime scene are prescribed through sections such as 173. 176, and 192, which stress the importance of documentation, photographs, and sketches of the crime scene, as well as the chain of custody, to maintain the integrity of the evidence. Documentation is important for establishing the modus operandi and behavioural characteristics in serial crimes, as recommended in police manuals.[2]

Crime scene documentation can be defined as the systematic and simultaneous recording of all verifiable facts at the crime scene before any change, contamination, or destruction takes place. The Indian police manuals and forensic science guidelines emphasise that documentation should begin immediately after the crime scene has been secured, as any delay, omission, or improper documentation can result in the irreversible compromise of the evidentiary value of physical as well as contextual evidence.[3] Although the process of preparation, attempt, and commission can be proved through physical facts, the mental state of the offender is necessarily internal and cannot be directly observed; rather, it has to be inferred from behaviour, circumstances, and indicators available at the crime scene.

Insufficient documentation at this early formative level will considerably impede the court's ability to make sound inferences about intent, knowledge, or recklessness at a later trial level. While the reference material does not specifically address the issue of crime scene documentation, it does acknowledge that forensic psychiatric experts, when retained at the request of investigating agencies, can account for criminal behaviour among mentally incompetent persons, thereby impacting the interpretation of collected material. This highlights the fact that crime scene documentation is not merely about preserving physical evidence but also provides the factual foundation upon which behavioural and psychological opinions will later be based in the Indian criminal justice system.[4]

RECORDING BEHAVIOURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS AT CRIME SCENES: SCOPE AND LEGAL RELEVANCE:

Documentation of behavioural and psychological cues at crime scenes is an important yet unexplored aspect of criminal investigation in India. Behavioural cues, such as modus operandi, ritualistic/symbolic behaviour, victim choice, unnecessary or excessive violence, and attempts to conceal the crime, are circumstantial indications of psychological reality, especially the perpetrator's intention, knowledge, and mental state. According to the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, mental states are not directly provable and can only be inferred from

circumstances, and only facts ascertained under Sections 3-50 (which deal with the relevancy of facts)are given legal significance.[5] Therefore, the failure to document these indicators at the crime scene will lead to the loss of legally admissible facts, even if they seem logically relevant, and may be deemed inadmissible as unstructured or subjective impressions.[6]

This proof technique is firmly rooted in the judicial reasoning of R v Prince (1875), where the English Court of Crown Cases Reserved asserted that criminal intention is not established by access to the accused's mind but by inference from conduct and circumstances attending the act. The court asserted that where an accused intentionally carried out an act that was prohibited by law, the necessary mens rea can be inferred despite allegations of subjective belief. This case, therefore, reaffirms that external conduct is the legal gateway to proving internal mental states.[7]

Though crime scene manuals and reference guides do not have an implicit requirement for the documentation of behavioural and psychological signs, they recognize the involvement of forensic psychologists and psychiatrists in criminal investigations.[8] Their input, which includes behavioural analysis, crime linkage, suspect prioritization, and intelligence-led policing, indicates that knowledge of behavioural patterns is essential in criminal investigation, although at times accessed later and only upon request from the investigating agencies. Crime analysis and intelligence analysis, which are founded on forensic psychology, further emphasize the significance of recognizing behavioural consistencies to link crimes and evaluate offender traits.[9]

Documentation of crime scenes, therefore, needs to go beyond tangible evidence to identify signs indicative of the perpetrator's mental state. In the instance of serial crimes, law enforcers need to document pattern recognition features, which may include whether the crime was planned or disorganized, signs of planning as opposed to impulsiveness, ritualistic or symbolic behaviour, and measures taken to evade detection. These signs help courts in establishing whether the suspect appreciated "the nature and quality of the act" and whether the actions amount to conscious choice or psychological compulsion. Behavioural consistency in multiple crime scenes, for example, through the use of distinct signatures or victim-choosing techniques, therefore, becomes crucial circumstantial evidence in evaluating criminal responsibility, mens rea, and the relevance of forensic psychiatric expertise.[10]

SECURING AND PRESERVING THE SCENE

Securing and protecting the crime scene is the most important phase of any criminal investigation because it ensures that the evidence is not damaged, altered, or lost. In India, the investigative manuals state that the first responding officer must immediately secure the crime scene to prevent contamination. This involves cordoning off the area and restricting entry and exit from the crime scene.

An entry and exit register is maintained, which records the name and purpose of every person who enters the crime scene. This is done to ensure that the integrity of the evidence is maintained and later helps in establishing the chain of custody.[11]

Methods Used to Preserve and Document the Scene:

Indian crime scene documentation relies on three primary methods:

1. **Written Documentation**
   Investigators prepare detailed observation notes and a **scene mahazar (observation mahazar)**. The mahazar records the exact location of the scene, position of objects, condition of the body, bloodstains, weapons, and any signs of disturbance. Courts treat the mahazar as a reliable, contemporaneous record and often rely heavily on it during trial.[12]

2. **Photographic Documentation**
   Photography is mandatory and must be done before any item is disturbed. Manuals prescribe taking overall, mid-range, and close-up photographs to capture both the layout and fine details. This ensures that the scene can later be accurately reconstructed.
3. **Sketches and Plans**
   Sketches supplement photographs by showing measurements, direction, and relative positioning of evidence. These sketches help forensic experts and courts visualize the scene even years later.[13]

Systematic Search and Evidence Documentation :

The Indian manuals also recommend systematic searches like strip searches, spiral searches, zone searches, or wheel searches based on the nature of the crime scene. Each piece of evidence is given a number, marked, and documented at the precise spot where it is collected. This way, the entire investigation can be replicated if needed.

Challenges in Crime Scene Preservation in India:

Despite the proper procedure, there are three significant challenges Indian investigations face[14]:

- **Contamination Risks**
  Crime scenes are often vulnerable to contamination in crowded settings, which results in the presence of foreign DNA, displaced articles, and destruction of behavioural evidence. This is particularly problematic in cases of psychopathy or serial crimes, where minute details such as body placement or ritualistic patterns are vital to the understanding of the perpetrator's motives.

- **Resource Limitations**
  Most police stations lack modern forensic facilities and trained staff. While there are plans to enhance cyber and forensic capacities, such plans may not always address the practical issues of evidence preservation.
- **Procedural Errors**
  Procedural errors in the preservation of appropriate documentation, entry logs, and chain of custody affect the legal potency of evidence. In serial offences, procedural errors can disrupt the continuity between various crime scenes, thus undermining the evidence of behavioural patterns.[15]

IMPORTANCE OF CRIME SCENE PRESERVATION:

1. **Crime Scene as the Primary Source of Truth**

The crime scene is the most authentic source of truth in serious crimes, particularly in cases involving serial offenders. The crime scene is the only place where the original truth can be preserved. Once the crime scene is tampered with, the original truth cannot be established.
Why is it important in the case of serial crimes?

Serial offenders tend to repeat certain acts. These acts can only be identified if the crime scene is properly preserved. In the case of State of Rajasthan v. Teja Ram (1999), the Supreme Court observed that if the evidence is not properly handled at the crime scene, it will seriously undermine the prosecution's case and the authenticity of the investigation.[16] The judgment

recognises the probative value of scientific examination of weapons, such as blood-stained axes. However, it also acknowledges the limitations of forensic science, noting that failure to detect certain blood elements does not automatically negate the evidence's significance, provided the scientific procedures are properly conducted.

2. Preservation Aids in Establishing Mens Rea (Criminal Intent)

Criminal responsibility is not merely dependent on the act but also on the mental state of the guilty (mens rea). As intention cannot be directly observed, it is inferred from the surrounding circumstances, which are preserved at the crime scene.[17]

Examples:

- Planning or concealment indicates intention
- Excessive violence indicates abnormal psychology
- Repeated commission of similar crimes indicates deliberation

In the case of State of Maharashtra v. Mohd. Yakub (1980), the Court held that mens rea must be inferred from conduct, preparation, and the circumstances surrounding the act.[18]

3. Importance in Psychopathy and Serial Offender Cases:

In crimes related to psychopathy and serial offending, the crime scene takes on a special significance since, in most cases, the perpetrator does not have a clear motive like revenge, provocation, or personal gain. In the case of psychopathic offenders, the common traits include a lack of emotional response, a lack of remorse, and manipulative tendencies. In this scenario, the crime scene becomes the most important source of information regarding the mental state and behaviour of the perpetrator since there is no emotional response or confession.

Role of Psychology:

Forensic psychologists make extensive use of crime scene data to carry out behavioural analysis and profiling. Their evaluation is grounded in observable behaviour evident at the crime scene and not in mere conjecture. For instance, the use of excessive violence may suggest a lack of control or sadistic tendencies, but meticulous cleaning of the crime scene may suggest awareness of the offence and the ability to plan. The psychologist cannot evaluate whether the

culprit acted with conscious intent or under psychological compulsion without proper documentation and preservation of the crime scene data.[19]

What Psychology Contributes After the Physical Scene Is Documented

1) Identifying Behavioural Cues That Matter

Forensic psychologists with training in investigative and behavioural sciences are able to identify behavioural signs at a crime scene that might not be noticed by technical crime scene examiners alone.[20]
These include:

•Irregularities in typical interaction patterns with the environment,

•Offender decision-making signs,

•Behavioural dynamics between victims and offenders.

In a controlled study, it was found that forensic psychologists were able to identify significantly more behavioural signs related to the offender's behaviour than traditional crime scene examiners, and this aided in the detection of evidence of high evidential value.[21]

2) Integration of Behavioural Interpretation and Evidence Collection

Psychology enhances documentation by assisting the investigator in identifying and prioritising evidence that is indicative of offender mentality and behaviour.
Investigative psychologists assist the forensic examiner in:

- Emphasising evidence that is indicative of offender decision-making rather than just physical evidence,
- Understanding patterns that are indicative of planning, control, emotions, and risk levels,
- Understanding spatial relationships and actions.[22]

3. Profiling and Behavioural Reconstruction

Psychology can also be used for behavioural profiling, which connects what was done at the crime scene to why it was done.

This is based on well-established forensic psychology procedures whereby elements of the crime scene are interpreted in the context of behavioural theories to establish offender characteristics and intentions.[23]

Examples include:

- Analysis of the location and type of injuries,
- Evidence distribution patterns,
- Control was demonstrated at the crime scene.

4. Improving Forensic Decision-Making

Psychological knowledge is more than just a concept, as it impacts what is written down and how. Psychological knowledge in investigations helps with:

- The identification of trace evidence that is relevant versus irrelevant,
- The re-prioritisation of evidence as the case develops,
- The minimisation of cognitive biases that could impact the interpretation of documentation.[24]

SENTENCING OUTCOME: IMPRISONMENT VERSUS INSTITUTIONALISATION

Sentencing is the last and most significant phase of criminal adjudication, transforming findings on guilt, intent, and responsibility into actual sentences. It embodies several penal goals: retribution, deterrence, reformation, and protection of society. In terms of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the sentence of imprisonment is the paramount form of punishment where there exists, finally, mens rea and criminal liability. However, Indian criminal law recognises that not all offenders are endowed with the mental capacity or legal competency to attract penal

liability. Thus, cases involving insanity or legal incapacity, especially children and persons of unsound mind, call for a special approach to sentencing.

Unsoundness of Mind and Institutionalisation

It is quite unjust and counterproductive if a person involved in the prohibited action (actus reus) lacks criminal responsibility on the grounds of unsoundness of mind. The said section provides for the said concept by stating that under Section 22 BNS, a person who is incapable of understanding the nature or wrongfulness of the act due to mental illness shall be exempted.

In such situations, courts do not acquit the accused, but rather order institutionalization of the accused in accordance with the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, specifically sections 367 to 378 of the BNSS, which act in conjunction with the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, in that it grants courts the power to commit the criminal to a mental health treatment center in a humane fashion, while ensuring public safety as well.

In State of Rajasthan v. Shera Ram (2012), to commit a criminal offence, mens rea is generally taken to be an essential element of crime. It is said 'furiosus nulla voluntus est'. In other words, a person who is suffering from a mental disorder cannot be said to have committed a crime, as he does not know what he is doing. For committing a crime, the intention and act both are taken to be the constituents of the crime, 'actus non facit reum nisi mens sit rea'. Every normal and sane human being is expected to possess some degree of reason to be responsible for his/her conduct and acts unless the contrary is proved. But a person of unsound mind or a person suffering from a mental disorder cannot be said to possess this basic norm of human

behaviour.[25]

Child Offenders Below Seven Years: Absolute Immunity

Indian Criminal Law extends the protection of children even further, since it accepts the absolute incapacity of young offenders. Thus, section 20 BNS states:
"Nothing is an offence which is done by a child under seven years of age."[26]

Such a provision is founded on the doctrine of doli incapax, under which it is presumed that children under the age of seven are not capable of forming the necessary mental intent for the commission of any crime. Hence, there is no question of sentencing, either imprisoning or institutionalising these children under criminal laws.

"Indian Instances" and Judicial Understanding

Although criminal trials are forbidden, there are recorded instances of children below seven years old committing grave offences that fall under the category of juvenile care, not criminal law.
In one case that came to light in 2018, a six-year-old in Uttar Pradesh allegedly caused the death of younger sibling while playing. The case was ruled under Section 84 of the IPC (sec 20 of BNS). It was handled under child welfare counselling. The child involved was unsupervised when the death of a younger sibling occurred. The case relied on Section 82 IPC and child welfare counselling.[27]

Imprisonment versus Institutionalisation: A Proportionate Approach

It can safely be stated that sentencing in criminal jurisdiction has to be proportionate, both in terms of the gravity of the offence and the mental capacity of the criminal offender. While imprisonment is a penalty that remains valid when there is a clear link established between mens rea, criminal intent, and responsibility, it must be noted that in Indian criminal jurisdiction, there is a clear acknowledgment that a penalty would not remain just when there was a lack of mental capacity on the part of the criminal offender.
Further, an accused person who was of unsound mind and therefore unable to understand the nature and wrongfulness of the act perpetrated would be exempted from liability under Section 20 of the BNS. Such persons can be ordered to be sent for institutionalisation under the care of mental health facilities under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, under Sections 367-378, as opposed to undergoing any form of punishment for the offence committed.

BACKDROP IN INDIAN LAW LEADING TO DELAY IN IDENTIFICATION OF SERIAL OFFENCES:

Absence of a Statutory Crime Linkage Mechanism

There is no provision of any national crime linkage and behavioural system in the Indian Criminal Law. Each case is dealt with independently as per the CrPC/BNSS, even if the crimes are of a similar nature. Indian Criminal Law does not direct the police to cross-match the violent crimes in the districts or states, and therefore, serial crimes remain undetected for a long time.

Fragmented Policing and Jurisdictional Barriers

Policing is included in the State List of the Constitution, but there is no legal obligation to share data relating to crime scene evidence, DNA, and modus operandi between states. Serial criminals who operate in multiple states use this disjointed approach to evade identification.

Weak Statutory Framework in Forensic Science

Even though one may introduce evidence under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, there is no time frame stated for producing evidence. Delays in DNA testing, ballistics, and toxicology reports help in not linking multiple crime scenes.

Non-institutionalisation of Behavioural Analysis

Indian law has not formally acknowledged criminal profiling and/or Behavioural Linkage Analysis as an essential requirement for criminal investigations. Behavioural evidence is treated circumspectly and/or completely ignored.

Over-reliance on Confessional and Witness Evidence

However, the investigative process continues to be confession-oriented. Serial patterns are rarely recognised apart from arrest and confession.

CONCLUSION:

It is deducible from this study that the persistent inability to detect serial offenders in India is mainly due to structural flaws in criminal law and procedure, including but not limited to the non-availability of a statutory crime linkage system, absence of inter-state policing coordination, delay in forensic investigations, and the non-institutionalisation of behavioural and psychological assessment. These gaps lead to weakened investigation and implicate the constitutional guarantee of fair procedure under Article 21. To grapple with this, Indian criminal law urgently needs a science-driven framework through integrating forensic technology, behavioural analysis, along with compulsory inter-agency coordination. Such restructuring is necessary to ensure early detection of serial offenders, prevent re-victimisation, and enhance public trust in the rule of law.

30 TIGER CONSERVATION IN INDIA "THE PARADOX OF SUCCESS: INVESTIGATING HUMAN-TIGER CONFLICT AND THE GENETIC VIABILITY OF WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AMIDST INDIA'S RAPID INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION"

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ABSTRACT

Tiger conservation in India is globally recognized as one of the most successful . Large carnivore recovery programs. Initiated through Project Tiger in 1973, the Program aimed to protect the declining tiger population caused by hunting, Habitat destruction, and ecological imbalance. Over the decades, India has Expanded its network of tiger reserves, strengthened wildlife protection laws Such as the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), improved surveillance systems, and Adopted scientific monitoring techniques like camera trapping and DNA Analysis. As a result, India has witnessed a steady increase in tiger numbers, Making it home to the largest tiger population in the world. Positive growth ,Indicators include increased prey base, better habitat management, improved Funding, and community participation in eco-development programs. However, Conservation growth has also generated new challenges. Rising tiger Populations in restricted habitats have intensified territorial competition and Increased human–tiger conflicts, particularly in buffer and fringe areas. Infrastructure projects such as highways, railways, mining, and urban expansion. Have fragmented habitats, disrupting wildlife corridors. Climate change, forest Fires, and illegal wildlife trade continue to threaten long-term sustainability. This research evaluates both the positive outcomes and negative consequences Of tiger population growth in India. It highlights the need for landscape-level, Conservation planning, corridor connectivity, community-based conservation ,Models, and sustainable development policies to ensure long-term ecological balance and coexistence.

A Legacy of Conservation

For over five decades, India has led the world in wildlife recovery through **Project Tiger**, launched in 1973. This initiative transformed conservation from simple protection into a sophisticated scientific operation, utilizing satellite tracking and the **M-STrIPES** digital monitoring system. While the population plummeted to dangerous lows in the 20th century, modern efforts have seen a remarkable turnaround, with India now home to approximately **75% of the world's wild tigers**. This success is a testament to the synergy between government policy, dedicated forest guards, and local communities who coexist with these magnificent cats.

The Road Ahead

Despite these triumphs, the journey of tiger conservation in India faces evolving challenges such as **habitat fragmentation** and human-wildlife conflict. As tiger numbers grow, they often venture outside protected corridors into human-dominated landscapes, requiring innovative solutions like eco-bridges and community-led conservation. Today, the focus has shifted toward the **International Big Cat Alliance**, an India-led global initiative that shares these successful conservation blueprints with other nations, ensuring that the roar of the tiger continues to echo through the forests of Asia for generations to come.

IMPORTANCE OF TIGERS TO ECOSYSTEM

For your research paper, here is the section on the ecological significance of the Bengal Tiger, meticulously formatted with **Harvard Bluebook** citations.

ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: THE TIGER AS AN APEX PREDATOR

The role of the Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) in the Indian ecosystem extends beyond its cultural status; it functions as a biological regulator essential to the structural integrity of the forest. By serving as an "Umbrella Species," the tiger's protection facilitates the conservation of entire biomes.

Trophic Cascade and Herbivore Regulation

As the apex predator at the pinnacle of the food chain, the tiger regulates the populations of large herbivores, including Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*), Chital (*Axis axis*), and Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*).[1]

- **Preventing Overgrazing:** In the absence of top-down regulation, herbivore populations expand exponentially, leading to the depletion of forest undergrowth. This "trophic cascade" ensures that forest canopy and floor vegetation remain lush, which is a prerequisite for effective carbon sequestration.[2]
- **Selection for Fitness:** Predation by tigers typically targets the aged, weak, or infirm within a prey herd. This natural selection maintains the genetic vigor and health of the prey population.

The "Umbrella Species" Concept

Tiger conservation is synonymous with "ecosystem conservation." To sustain a single male tiger, an estimated 80–100 square kilometers of undisturbed forest is required.

- **Biodiversity Shield:** The legal protection of tiger habitats provides a "de facto" shield for co-predators (e.g., *Cuon alpinus* or Dholes), smaller mammals, and avian species sharing the same landscape.
- **Habitat Diversity:** Tiger reserves in India safeguard a vast array of biomes, ranging from the littoral mangroves of the Sundarbans to the montane evergreen forests of the Western Ghats.

Water Security and Catchment Protection

A critical, often overlooked function of tiger reserves is their role as watersheds. Most of India's perennial river systems either originate from or traverse through tiger-occupied forests.

- **Watershed Management:** Maintaining forest cover for tigers prevents soil erosion and enables root systems to facilitate the slow release of rainwater into river basins.
- **National Security:** Reserves such as Kanha, Corbett, and Panna function as primary catchments for millions of people downstream, making tiger conservation a central pillar of national water security.

Climate Change Mitigation and Carbon Sequestration

Tiger reserves function as massive terrestrial carbon sinks. Research indicates that the carbon stock within India's 58 tiger reserves is significantly higher than in non-protected forest regions. The dense vegetation required for a healthy tiger habitat absorbs substantial atmospheric CO_2, serving as a primary defense against anthropogenic climate change.

Indicators of Ecological Health

The presence of a breeding tiger population serves as the ultimate "ecological report card." A thriving population implies:

1. **Sufficient Primary Productivity:** Abundant vegetation to support the prey base.
2. **Hydrological Stability:** Adequate and perennial water supply.
3. **Low Anthropogenic Pressure:** Minimal human disturbance and encroachment.

1. PROJECT TIGER

PROJECT TIGER: INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION AND OPERATIONAL

DYNAMICS

Project Tiger represents the fundamental administrative framework for carnivore conservation in India. Since its inception, it has evolved from a reactive protectionist measure into a proactive, technology-driven management system.

Historical Context and Genesis

Project Tiger was inaugurated on April 1, 1973, under the administration of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Jim Corbett National Park. This initiative was necessitated by an unprecedented ecological crisis; while India housed an estimated 40,000 tigers at the beginning of the 20th century, census data from 1972 revealed a collapse to 1,827 individuals due to anthropogenic pressures and unregulated hunting.[1] Initially encompassing nine reserves, the project sought to eliminate factors contributing to habitat depletion and implement restorative management practices to return ecosystems to their climax states.[2]

The Core-Buffer-Corridor Management Strategy

The administrative efficacy of Project Tiger is rooted in the "Core-Buffer-Corridor" spatial model.

- **Core Area:** Designated as "Critical Tiger Habitat," these zones are legally protected as National Parks or Sanctuaries. Under the *Wildlife (Protection) Act*, human activity is strictly prohibited to maintain an undisturbed breeding environment.[3]
- **Buffer Zone:** This multi-use peripheral area permits regulated human activity and sustainable eco-tourism. It functions as a "shock absorber," mitigating direct interface between wildlife and human settlements while providing vital dispersal space.
- **Corridors:** These are terrestrial links between reserves essential for genetic exchange. Without viable corridors, tiger populations risk becoming "ecological islands," leading to inbreeding depression.

Current Status and the TX2 Global Milestone

By April 2026, the Project Tiger network has expanded to **58 Tiger Reserves** across 18 states, accounting for approximately 2.4% of India's geographical landmass. India achieved the international "TX2" goal—a commitment made at the 2010 St. Petersburg Tiger Summit to double wild tiger populations—four years ahead of the 2022 target. The most recent national estimation places the population at approximately **3,682 tigers**, constituting nearly 75% of the global wild population.

Technological Evolution: The M-STrIPES Platform

A primary catalyst for recent conservation successes is the transition to evidence-based monitoring via the **M-STrIPES** (Monitoring System for Tigers: Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) platform.

- **Real-Time Surveillance:** Utilizing GPS-enabled mobile applications, forest guards record patrol trajectories, wildlife sightings, and illicit activities.[7]
- **Scientific Accuracy:** By integrating field data with high-resolution camera trap imagery and DNA-based scat analysis, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has replaced the traditional, less reliable "pugmark" method with robust statistical modeling.

Emerging Challenges: The Success Paradox

The quantitative recovery of the tiger has introduced a "success paradox," characterized by two primary threats:

1. **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** As populations reach carrying capacity within core areas, tigers venture into human-dominated landscapes, increasing incidents of livestock predation and human injury.

ANALYSIS OF MODERN CHALLENGES AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

The quantitative success of India's tiger recovery has paradoxically introduced a

"success paradox," where growing populations face acute spatial and ecological constraints. This section evaluates the friction between conservation mandates and national developmental trajectories.

Habitat Fragmentation and Linear Infrastructure

The most significant threat to the long-term genetic viability of the species is the fragmentation of forest patches.

- **The Corridor Crisis:** While India manages 58 protected reserves, many function as "ecological islands." Tigers require terrestrial connectivity to migrate between reserves for genetic dispersal. Currently, 32 critical wildlife corridors are bisected by linear infrastructure, including national highways, railway lines, and high-tension power grids.[1]
- **Genetic Bottlenecks:** Restricting movement leads to isolated subpopulations susceptible to inbreeding depression, which manifests as reduced fertility and heightened vulnerability to disease.[2]

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) and the "Success Paradox"

As tiger densities reach "carrying capacity" within core areas, sub-adult and aging individuals are displaced into buffer zones and fringe villages.

- **Livestock Predation:** A deficit in natural prey bases in human-dominated landscapes forces tigers to target domestic cattle, inflicting severe economic hardship on marginalized agricultural communities.[3]
- **Retaliatory Killings:** Despite the existence of ex-gratia compensation schemes, administrative delays and procedural hurdles often drive communities to employ "silent" killing methods, such as poisoning carcasses or using illegal electric fences.[4]
- **Safety and Social Volatility:** Frequent encounters in agricultural lands—particularly the sugarcane belts of the Terai region—have transformed tiger presence into a volatile socio-political issue.

Resource Constraints and Administrative Gaps

High-level policy intent is frequently undermined by operational scarcities at the ground level.

- **Staffing Crisis:** Front-line protection forces face a 30–40% vacancy rate in several states. Furthermore, the high average age of forest guards—often exceeding 50 years—hampers the physical rigors of intensive foot patrolling.
- **Equipment Disparity:** Funding is often concentrated in "A-tier" reserves (e.g., Corbett, Kanha), leaving newer or smaller reserves with inadequate wireless communication, all-terrain vehicles, and modern veterinary gear for tranquilization.

The Persistence of Illegal Wildlife Trade

While large-scale organized poaching has been curtailed since the mid-2000s, the illegal trade remains a persistent threat.

- **Global Market Demand:** International syndicates continue to drive demand for tiger derivatives (bones, skins, and claws) for traditional medicine and luxury status symbols.
- **Technological Poaching:** Poachers have adopted sophisticated, low-signature methods, such as localized electrocution via overhead lines and non-metallic traps that evade standard detection equipment.

Climate Change and Environmental Shifts

Environmental instability is introducing unpredictable variables into tiger habitat management.

- **The Sundarbans Vulnerability:** Rising sea levels increase salinity in mangrove ecosystems and reduce available landmass, compressing the habitat of the world's

only mangrove-dwelling tigers and forcing them into frequent human contact.[8]

- **Anthropogenic Forest Fires:** Escalating summer temperatures have increased the frequency of forest fires, destroying the understory vegetation essential for the prey base and destabilizing the local food chain.

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ISBN: 978-93-471-7502-2